

**JEAN FOUCHARD**

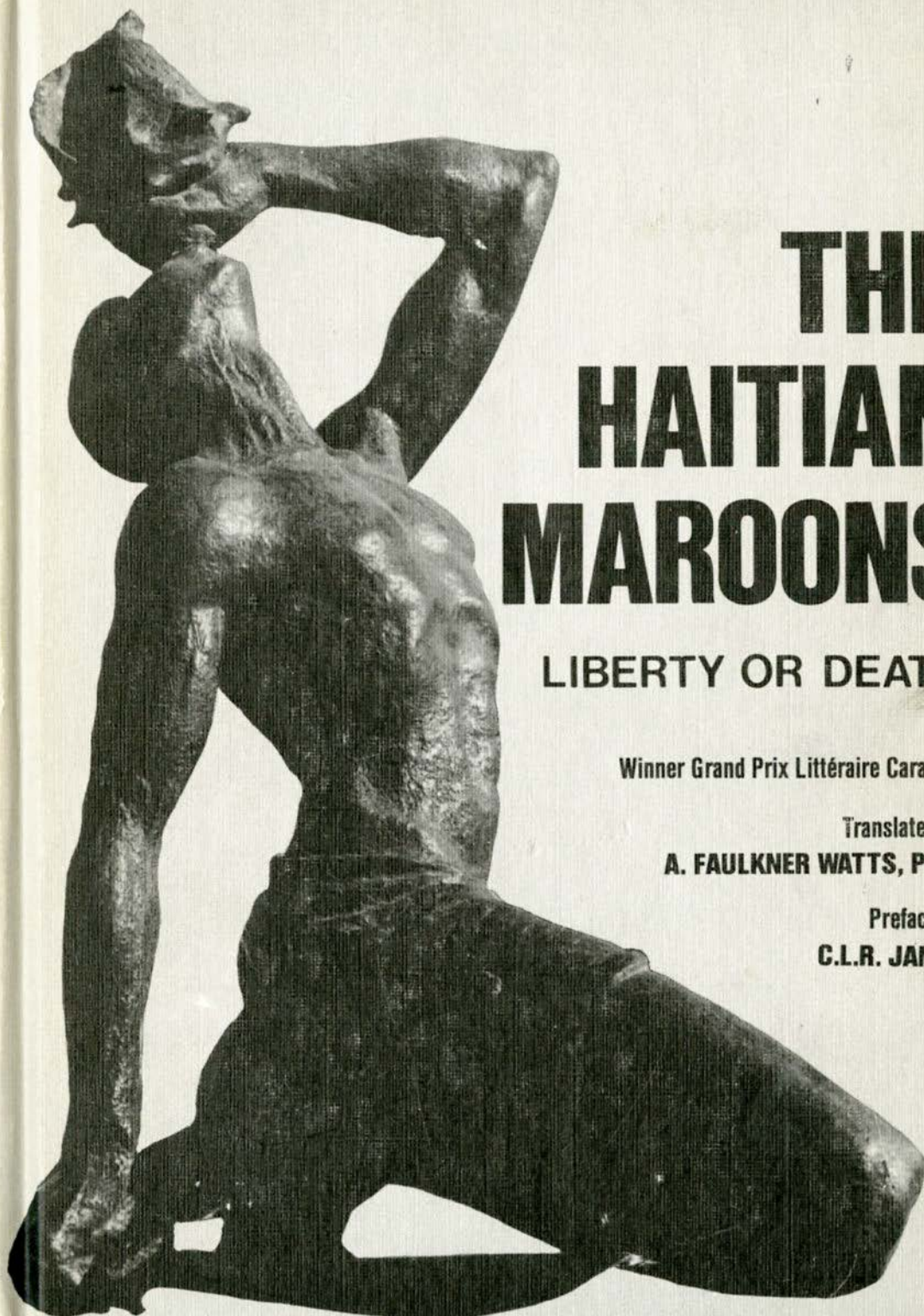
# **THE HAITIAN MAROONS**

**LIBERTY OR DEATH**

**Winner Grand Prix Littéraire Caraïbes**

**Translated by  
A. FAULKNER WATTS, Ph.D.**

**Preface by  
C.L.R. JAMES**





# MER DU NORD

## CARTE DE L'ISLE DE SAINT DOMINGUE

Dressée en 1722 pour l'usage du ROY  
sur les memoires de M. Frezier Ingenieur de S.M. et autres  
assujettis aux Observations Astronomiques  
Par G. de l'Isle premier Geographe du ROY, de l'Academie R. des Sciences  
A AMSTERDAM  
Chez JEAN COUVENS et CORNEILLE MORTIER  
Geographes.

### Echelle



## ISLES LUCAYES



### Debouquement des Caïques



### Debouquement des Isles Turques



### Debouquement du Mouchoir quarré





JEAN FOUCHARD

# THE HAITIAN MAROONS

LIBERTY OR DEATH

Worship Group F.V. Union, New York, New York

Translated from the French by  
A. TRILLINGER VERTÉ, Ph.D.

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## PREFACE

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*THE HAITIAN MAROONS* takes an automatic and assured place among the historical masterpieces of the age. Historical masterpiece in one of the precious intellectual spheres and specialties of Western Civilization? Yes. What gaps are filled? What idols overthrown before such a claim can be completely accepted?

*The history must definitely repudiate a hitherto accepted historical fact and substitute a new historical conception.* Mr. Fouchard establishes that the Haitian nation, the result of the only successful slave revolt in history, was formed, organized and maintained by the Maroons, the slaves who had run away from the slave society organized by the Metropolitan forces and made a place for themselves in the inaccessible hills. Hitherto they had been considered merely as accessories, more or less important to the national movement against slavery and for independence. The author establishes that the other participants in the revolt are the accessories; without the Maroons there could have been no successful foundation of a new state, perhaps not even a full-blooded revolution.

*This rejection of the old view and the establishment of a new is achieved not by new investigation or reorganization of familiar material; the historical terrain is re-examined and entirely new material is made the foundation of a new conclusion.* As one who has done serious research in this field, and is also aware of the splendid work done by the Haitian historians, the material on which Mr. Fouchard bases his thesis comes as a revelation. He is aware of the work of past historians and researchers. But his main source, as he tells on the very first page, are the newspapers of San Domingo. From the information therein he makes unexpected and exhilarating use of the slaves who are offered for sale, and the slaves who have fled from their masters, that is to say, the Maroons.

Mr. Fouchard does not only accumulate facts or organize them according to a method. The facts and the ideas which have stimulated him dictate the very structure of the book. When a historian is suffused with the idea that he has something new and important to communicate, something historically new, it is immediately obvious in the structure of his book, as it is here. Mr. Fouchard participates in the contemporaneity of the term "structure," a highly significant philosophical term today.

From his opening chapter descriptions of the Maroons Mr. Fouchard moves to a critical examination of the "classic" causes of what I will call



*maroonage*. Building to a logical and dramatic conclusion he repudiates the causes which we have grown accustomed to call "classic." The slaves, he demonstrates, sought liberty.

But the author is not satisfied with that. Maroons, slavery, oppression, we know today are matters of relation, the relation between one section of the population and another. So next Mr. Fouchard proceeds to the examination of these relations at close hand.

*The whole procedure is recognized as an example and a development of new processes of history writing which are taking place all over the civilized world.* In Richard Wright's *Black Boy* he tells the story of how his grandfather had been deprived of his pension as a veteran of the Civil War.

For decades a long correspondence took place between Grandpa and the War Department; in letter after letter Grandpa would recount events and conversations . . . ; he would name persons long dead, citing their ages and descriptions, reconstructing battles in which he had fought, naming towns, rivers, creeks, roads, cities, villages, citing the names and numbers of regiments and companies with which he had fought . . . and send it all to the War Department in Washington.

The details that Grandpa writes, repeated and extended in his letters, those details are the grounding of contemporary history. It is possible that there are many such memories and even material passed on from generation to generation among the great masses of black people everywhere, and especially those in the Caribbean and the United States today. Often this material can illuminate and foster recognition of historical significance in passages often passed over casually as merely interesting.

From the memoirs of a man of our own generation we can go back to a famous history of the Caribbean written by Richard Ligon in London, 1653; *A True and Exact History of The Island of Barbados, 1647-1650*.

Their sufferings being grown to a great height, and their daily complaining to one another (of the intolerable burdens they laboured under) being spread throughout the Iland: at the last, some amongst them, whose spirits were not able to endure such slavery, resolved to break through it, or die in the act; and conspired with some others whose sufferings were equall . . . resolved to draw as many of the discontented party into the plot, as possibly they could; and those of this perswasion were the greatest number in the Iland. So that a day was appointed to fall upon their Masters, and cut all their throats . . . to make themselves not only freemen, but Masters of the Iland. And so closely was this plot carried, as no discovery was made till the day before they were to put it in act: And then one of them . . . revealed this long plotted conspiracy; and by this timely advertisement the Masters were saved. Justice Hethersall . . . by examination, found out the greatest part of them; whereof eighteen of the principal men . . . and they the first leaders and contrivers of the plot, were put to death for example to the rest.

And the reason why they made examples of so many, was, they found these so haughty in the resolutions, and so incorrigible, as they were like enough to become actors in a second plot; and so they thought to secure them; and for the rest, to have a special eye over them.

After reading Fouchard such passages are not passed by. They cry out for integration into a historical context.

*The expansion of the historical method is recognized not only as of importance to history and historical writing. It can be, and will be, increasingly seen as an expansion of the knowledge of, and insight into, the great majority of human beings.* Note, not about the literary and historical process in general, but about their integral role in historical development and our knowledge of the world, its past, its present, and its future.

For some years now, a few historians have recognized that one only begins to write history when one writes about the great untutored mass of the population. Albert Soboul, for one, has written a history of the *sansculottes*, the rank and file of the French cities who above all were the creators of the great French revolution. In an issue of the New York Review of Books (June 12, 1975) Geoffrey Barraclough, a distinguished professor and organizer of historical writing and writers, once more repeated a conclusion which he has been advocating for years. One cannot "explain National Socialism in terms of Hitler alone," he says, adding that "he is not worth all the attention historians have paid him." It is Mr. Barraclough's thesis that to understand the extraordinary phenomenon of Hitler's Germany one has to examine and pay the utmost attention to the great mass of the population and not to Hitler himself, the embodiment of the conventional conception of "the leader," nor to any of the leaders. Among American historians, the most striking in this regard is Professor George P. Rawick. His study of slavery, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography: From Sundown to Sunup, The Making of the Black Community* focuses attention upon the slaves when they have left the fields and are living their own private lives.

These writers are sufficient to show the universal peak of historical writing today which merely carries to the ultimate incidental tendencies long present in the historical writing of the 19th century. It is obvious that this work of Mr. Fouchard adds distinction to that distinguished company.

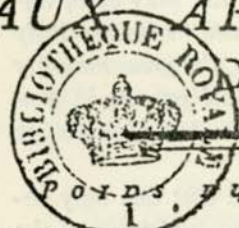
Any great revolution in historical thought has as its origin a revolutionary recognition of the concrete events, hitherto unsuspected, in the historical concatenation of the epoch in which the writer lives. This is a book not only for us in the Caribbean and the diaspora. It will become a *sine qua non* of the Third World and will take its place among the latest elucidations of historical method in Western civilization, suitable to the twentieth century (and beyond). The most advanced of Western historians will recognize an effective addition to their creative works.

—C. L. R. JAMES



# SUPPLEMENT AUX AFFICHES AMÉRICAINES

Du Samedi 10. Avril 1784.



Pain d'un escalin. . . . . 32 onces.

## Prix des Marchandises de la Colonie.

AU PORT-AU-PRINCE, le 10 de ce mois, Sucre blanc, première qualité 66 à 70 l. secorde, 54 à 60 l. troisième, 50 à 54 l. brut, 38 à 40 l. Indigo bleu, 12 l. à 12 l. 10 s. cuivré, 9 l. 10 s. à 10 l. Café nouveau, 16 à 17 s. vieux, 13 à 14 s. Coton. 175 à 180 livres.

## Prix des Marchandises de France.

AU PORT-AU-PRINCE, le 10 de ce mois, Vin vieux 150 à 180 l. nouveau, 90 à 110 l. Farine de Moissac, 66 à 70 l. commune, 50 l. Bœuf salé, 60 à 70 l. le baril. Petit-salé, 27 à 30 l. l'ancre, Beurre, 20 à 25 s. la livre. Huile, 36 l. le panier. Savon, 28 à 30 l. la caisse.

## Cours du Fret.

AU PORT-AU-PRINCE, Sucre blanc, 10 à 12 deniers. brut, 10 à 12 den. Indigo, 36 den. Café 10 à 12 d. Coton, 36 den.

## NÈGRES MARRONS.

AU PETIT-GOAVE, le 25 Février dernier, est entré à la Geole, un Mulâtre, nommé Pierre, Curaçolien, sans étampe, âgé de 24 ans, taille de 5 pieds 1 à 2 pouces, se disant appartenir à M. Douque, Greffier à Saint-Eustache; & Laveille, Mondougue, étam-

pé sur le sein droit TARDIEU, au-dessous G. ANSE, se disant appartenir à M. Tardieu, à la Grande-Anse.

AU PORT-AU-PRINCE, le 2 de ce mois, Fatiman, Mandingue étampé AUTURO, au-dessous JACMEL, autant qu'on a pu le distinguer, ne pouvant dire son nom ni celui de son maître : le 5, Virgine, Capelaou, étampée FERS.F. se disant appartenir au nommé Antoine Bauduy, M. L. au Cal-de-Sac : le 6, Jeudi, Bambara, étampé EOU-REAU, au-dessous P.P. se disant appartenir à M. Boisson : le 7, Diegvenu, Congo, étampé illisiblement, ayant une chaîne au cou, se disant appartenir à la nommée Marie-Claire Pasquier, à la Charbonnière.

## ANIMAUX ÉPAVES.

AU PORT-AU-PRINCE, le 5 de ce mois, il a été conduit à la Geole, un Cheval sous poil brun étampé CDL, les deux dernières lettres entrelacées, llesé sur le dos; une Bourrique sous poil bai-blanc, étampée M, ayant un bât; & un Cheval sous poil rouan, étampé AN, ayant les pieds blancs : le 7, une Bourrique sous poil souris, étampée au cou MGP; & une Bourrique sous poil gris, étampée illisiblement : le 8, une Bourrique sous poil gris étampé illisiblement, ayant des poils brun sur le dos.

## GRAND CONCERT VOCALE ET INSTRUMENTAL

On donnera Dimanche 11 Avril, au théâtre, fice du Sieur Durand, Pensionnaire du Roi



## SUPPLÉMENT AUX AFFICHES AMÉRICAINES

Du Mercredi 11 Août 1784.

## ARRIVÉE DE NAVIRES AU CAP.

Le 5 de ce mois, la *Denise* de Bordeaux, Cap. Isard, parti le premier juillet; le 8, la *Princesse-Noire* de Nantes, Cap. Mallet, venant de la Côte-d'Angôle, parti le 2 novembre 1783; les *Treize-Cantons* de la Rochelle, Cap. Peronne, venant de la Côte-d'Angôle, parti le 11 septembre 1783; & le *Fanfan* de Marseille, Cap. Madou, venant de Malaga, parti le 15 février 1784.

## DÉPART DE NAVIRES DU CAP.

Le 4 de ce mois, l'*Homme-Instruction*, Cap. Barbel, pour le Havre; le 6, le *Conseil de Flandres*, Cap. Destruis, pour Bordeaux; le 9, la *Conception*, Cap. Sibilly, pour Marseille; & la *Marie-Constance*, Cap. Vitard, pour le Havre.

## TARIF DU POIDS DU PAIN.

Pain d'un escalin . . . . . 24 onces.

## NEGRES MARONS.

Au Fort-Dauphin, est entrée à la Geole le 31 du mois dernier, Germaine, Mulâtresse, créole de Caracole, âgée d'environ 18 ans, sans étampe, au sieur Larrieu au Cap, arrêtée en Ville; le premier de ce mois, un Negre nouveau, âgé d'environ 20 ans, taille de 5 pieds, étampé sur le sein gauche ESL, nation Ibo, arrêté à Maribaroux; le 4, Joseph, Créole Hollandois, se disant libre, gros & replet, sans étampe apparente, taille de 5 pieds, ayant des brûlures sur les épaules & presque tout le corps, arrêté au Trou; Julie, Créole, âgée d'environ 25 ans, taille de cinq pieds quelques pouces, étampée illisiblement sur les deux seins, au sieur Odor au London, arrêtée à la Grande-Coline; Nanon, vieille Nègresse Créole, âgée d'environ 50 ans, taille de 4 pieds 3 pouces environ, étampée sur le sein droit DELANGE, au sieur Delange, & vivant le certificat de celui par qui elle a été arrêtée, appartenant en propre à la Dame euve Bollanger au Port-de-l'Aix, arrêtée à embouchure du Massacre,

Au Cap, le 26 du mois dernier, François, Créole, étampé sur le sein gauche N. LEJEUNE, à M. Lejeune au Cap, arrêté en Ville; le 2 de ce mois, 2 Negres nouveaux, étampés sur le sein droit TYG, taille de 5 pieds 3 pouces, l'un arrêté à Limonade, & l'autre à la Petite-Anse; le 3, Léveillé, Congo, étampé sur le sein droit J. L. N. ANETÉ, âgé d'environ 28 ans, taille de 5 pieds 4 pouces, qui a dit appartenir à M. Biscave, arrêté à Plaisance; le 4, Japhet, Créole, étampé sur le sein droit COLET, à M. Faurès au Gros-Morne, arrêté à la Grand'Riviere; le 5, un Negre nouveau, Congo, étampé sur le sein droit DIDEROT, âgé d'environ 18 ans, moyenne taille, arrêté au Haut-du-Trou; le même jour, Rosette, Créole, sans étampe apparente, âgée d'environ 10 ans, petite taille, à M. Molines au Cap, arrêtée à la Petite-Anse; le même jour, Housse Trey, Negre-Espagnol, sans étampe apparente, âgé d'environ 18 ans, taille de 5 pieds, qui se dit libre de Porto-Cavaillo, arrêté à la Fosslette; le 7, Solala, Congo, sans étampe lisible, ayant un collier de fer avec une branche, âgé d'environ 20 ans, à M. Guay, arrêté à Limonade.

## ANIMAUX ÉPAVES.

Au Cap, le 27 du mois dernier, un Ane entier poil fouris, ayant au col une étampe illisible, arrêté au Limbé; le 8 de ce mois, un jeune poulain étampé sur la cuisse du montoir N, arrêté à la Petite-Anse; le 9, un Cheval poil brun, ayant sur la cuisse du montoir une étampe espagnole & une petite étoile sur le front, arrêté à la Petite-Anse.

*Etat des Negres épaves qui doivent être vendus à la Barre du Siege Royal du Fort-Dauphin, le 7 octobre prochain.*

Jean-Louis, Mulâtre, Indien de nation, étampé sur le sein droit PETIT, se disant appartenir au sieur Cassagne, arrêté à Ouaminthe.

Un Negre nouveau, nation Bambara, taille de 5 pieds 2 pouces, étampé illisiblement sur



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## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

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For a number of reasons certain words which appear frequently will not always be spelled the same way. For example, we have almost always honored the capitalization, or the absence of it, and the punctuation of the historical documents, observing also the lack of internal consistency exhibited in both these matters. Within the author's own text we have differentiated between the *creole* Frenchman and *Creole*, the language, between the individual *Maroon* and the act, to go *maroon*. As for the phenomenon marronage, we have simply and boldly borrowed it from the French as is, without italics or other special treatment.

In the chapter on *Names of the Colonists* the listing of names has been abridged.

## ERRATA

The Running Heads on pages 251 and 255 should read "Different Forms of Marronage" instead of "Different Forms of Marriage."



# I

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## DESCRIPTIONS OF MAROONS

FROM THE BEGINNING to the end of its thirty-year existence, the Saint-Domingue press provides an extraordinarily rich and varied documentation for the history of the most important of all French colonies. More than any contemporary witness of the era, these yellowed journals permit reexamination of daily life in Saint-Domingue during the years preceding and following the revolution. Their abundant and varied references touch upon every aspect of colonial affairs: the theater, literary and scientific life, the wealth of landed estates, the flow of merchandise and commodities, ship movements, and slave ship arrivals. Politics, legislation, education, meteorologic observations, the slave and marronage; important commercial and population statistics, arrivals and departure of colonists, rumors from Europe and mainland America, food, recreation, the progress of plantations and manufactures. . . . All of these are reflected in the press.

This long listing would be ideally complemented if only it were possible to hear once again the heartbeats of the people, to feel the pulse of the ports, to see the labors of the slave gangs, to sense the leaden solitude of the outlying cantons, and to follow the fluctuations in sugar, coffee, and indigo markets and the rise and fall of personal fortunes; to witness the libertine behavior, the love of high living and ostentation and to hear, rising above the road to riches, the mournful complaints, the anguish of the slaves, the sounds of their revolts. . . .

When, in their reference to slaves, the Saint-Domingue newspapers shamefully lump them with the plantation animals, they are faithfully reflecting colonial mentality. They are in tune with a contemporary manner of thinking and writing which, disdaining affectation, increasingly defied propriety and modesty with unglossed truth and crude details. This characteristic must have been especially typical of the Saint-Domingue men of affairs, the colony's cynics and realists. Whether it be a detail about the very brief labor preceding the queen's delivery of a sound, healthy prince,<sup>1</sup> or of Her Majesty's miscarriage immodestly recounted, daily examples of this are to be found in the *Affiches Américaines*:

On All Saints' Day certain mishaps suffered with unexpected suddenness by the Queen gave cause to fear a miscarriage. Her Majesty was most promptly given the best measures indicated, to no avail. The next day without effort and with scarcely any pain Her Majesty delivered an aborted, well-formed embryo attested by the most scrupulous and authentic examination. The Queen was in her third month of pregnancy. Of this unhappy event which destroyed the fondest hopes Her Majesty experienced no distressing aftermath.<sup>2</sup>

Or perhaps it is an item about the indisposition of the minister Marshal de Castries, "laid low by bleeding piles,"<sup>3</sup> or about the curious confessions of a colonial wife who "having buried four husbands before the age of thirty," denounced one of them known to be fond of extramarital idylls and the



attractions of black women. He is "caught in flagrant intimacy with a servant, a horror of about twenty four years of age. . . ." His wife, ". . . tired of the fact that he seldom shared with me his sex activity . . ." decided to get along without it. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

Clearly this is the same unrestrained direct language used in the incredibly contemptuous advertisements of runaway slaves and stray animals. Here are some verbatim examples followed by some very suggestive common models:

- For sale: Sr. Cazeau of Cul-de-Sac and soon leaving the island has for sale a black woman beautifully corpulent, a good laundress, and breastfeeding a mulatto boy. Available on trial basis.
- To be sold at Cap Government House, by lot or individually, eighty males free of mortgage, and six females, one with three children.
- At the sale previously announced for the sixth of the month Sr. Galtier residing in Léogâne near the Post will offer a fine catch of eighteen head of male slaves and little boys born in the island, a negress on the verge of giving birth, an excellent mulatto hairdresser, coachman and fair violinist, fifteen sheep, six mules, a herd of cows ready to give birth, a stubborn ass, seventeen goats, plus a one-armed solidly built griffe,\* an excellent driver, all fit for work, even the boys. Can arrange a fine combination for cash.
- For sale, a sugar mill in Léogâne with four carts, twelve mules, thirty slaves and other necessary tools.
- For sale, a forty-year-old slave woman, a good housekeeper, and her creole mulatto son between twenty and twenty-two, fit for anything.
- For sale, a complete family from the Delort estate, to wit, Joligout, a fifty-year-old Nago, his Congo wife Martha, forty, their sons Gaspard, nineteen, Jean-Pierre, fourteen, Jean-Baptiste, eight, and daughters Marie-Jeanne, sixteen, Anne, eleven, and Marie, five.
- For sale, together or separately, Fanchon, a Coüeda laundress, forty-three, and her twenty-five year old son, a good cook.
- Sale due to departure, wholesale or individually, a work gang of eighty slaves, half of them males.
- Sr. Rouvier offers an assortment of drugs, foodstuffs, several Congo boys, and Arada women all newly arrived and in fairly good condition.
- For sale as a unit, a mulatto woman house-servant, a wagon, mule and horse.
- Skilled slaves, one seven or eight months pregnant, belonging to Abbot Enos, leading cantor in Cap, living on the Street of the Nuns.
- For sale because of departure a lot consisting of furniture, chairs and beds,

---

\* Son of a black parent and one born of mulatto and black parents. The female of such a union was a griffonne.

three house-servants and other items. Nine *carreaux*\* newly planted in coffee. Inquire Jean Simon, free Negro living in Dondon, will accept payment in slaves or in cows, mules, sheep, horned animals and cavalines.

- For rent, two nursemaids of very good temperament, five slaves equally capable as cooks or housekeepers.
- A Negro wet nurse in exchange for a valet.
- For sale, an Arada almost ready to give birth, a young faithful creole of sixteen years and still a virgin, a very beautiful *griffonne* possessing all the qualities one could desire in a good housekeeper. Will accept payment in coffee.
- One Marie-Thérèse, freedwoman, offers for nine-year land lease a coffee plantation in Black Mountain, including slaves and animals.

### Runaways

- A new Negro, a Congo newly arrived, about twenty-five, carrying the Lascaze brand on both sides of the chest and Saint-Marc underneath, walks with difficulty because of severe hernia.
- A new slave, no name yet.
- A mulatto, six months a Maroon, between thirty and thirty-five, smallpox scars, branded and missing two fingers from his left hand, property of Sr. Louis Lapole of Petite Anse. Said mulatto passes for free, using a fake certificate.
- Jean-Louis, an Indian, looks white, has long straight hair.
- Zabeth, an Ibo, five feet one, quite homely, has scars and lash marks on her shoulders having only recently been whipped. Fled the home of the undersigned. Marianne, Free Mulatress and peddler of Bas-Limbé, carrying off a lot of merchandise. Reward of five portuguese for her return.
- Seven newly arrived slaves, part of the cargo of the vessel *L'aimable Henriette*, all Congos, not yet branded.
- Runaway, a male Thiamba slave with a new haircut and taking with him a horse with a newly cropped gray mane.
- Picked up at Morne Rouge a stray chestnut English horse, heavy body, no apparent brand . . . a roan mare branded F.L. in interlaced letters, a young blind mule with tips of ears split taken to the jail on the 12th instant, a brown she-ass, thigh branded STL Aux Cayes, brought back with her foal by the guard, a young ass, three months old, no brand, with a slight limp and right ear cut off, a reddish brown she-ass in foal, has leg sores.

### In Jail

- Jean-Baptiste, a Hausa branded P. Charles, about twenty years old, has a chain

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\* One carreau equalled 2.47 acres.



## 6 THE HAITIAN MAROONS: LIBERTY OR DEATH

around his neck, knock-kneed, reddish complexion, claims he belongs to Father Charles, Petit Goâve priest.

—Rosette, a creole, Coustard brand on the right breast, the two last letters interlaced, age fourteen, says she belongs to her father, one Antoine a free black in the Croix des Bouquets section.

—An Indian mulatto with many leg sores, his tongue cut out.

—Léveillé called Matou, a Nago, thirty-six to thirty-eight years old, five feet four, smallpox scarred, branded on his right chest Latouche and Mesmer and, below that, PPX and on the left of his chest "Arteau au Cap" and, below that, a superimposed brand and another illegible one; carries many facial and body scars characteristic of his people, speaks French well. Said slave fled the night of the ninth from Widow Chatelin's plantation in Artibonite, carrying his clothes and a machete.

—A new slave, seventeen, completely naked, short, arrested and brought back from Spanish territory and later to the Fort Dauphin jail, has no idea of his name or that of his master.

### *Sale of Stray Slaves*

—To be sold at the Royal Seat of Léogâne a new slave, a mute with no apparent brand; his left wrist lacerated by the irons detained at l'Hôpital des Pères; Jean Baptiste, a powerful Mondongo with pointed teeth says he escaped from the Lacombe plantation. Victoire and his two-year old, a light-skinned creole with both ears cut off, brand illegible; a Senegalese calling himself Caesar with no apparent brand, says he escaped from the corvette *Cupidon* in the slave port; Louis, an Indian Negro, claims to be free, slim, doesn't know his master's name; a blind male with a wizened left foot, lash marks on his chest, looks old and broken.

It is as though this were some macabre fantasy . . . but there is no more authentic image of the cruelty of slavery than these advertisements. They encompass a tragedy which for sheer barbarity has never been exceeded. On the one hand, rebellious serfs, branded and tamed lackeys—the beasts of labor and the castrated bulls of the colony—exhibiting beneath their ragged garments the bite of the whip upon their black skin. On the other hand, always mercilessly rapacious as in some unequal jungle confrontation, the white colonial masters and their apprentices, the free blacks and mixed-bloods.

All of this is revived and lived again, thanks to the Saint-Domingue press. On the basis of this exceptionally interesting mass of information, it is now possible to study marronage itself. Within the framework of blood and tears, teeming with vice, and rent by the sounds of pain, marronage was born and developed over the years, an elusive problem of fleeting shadows . . . the aborted dreams of escape from shackles . . . tenacious desire never diminished . . . breathless fugitives captured and dragged off to jail . . . routed rebels crushed to earth confining their weary, broken bodies to its bitter



furrows streaked with blood across the three hundred years of colonization. Marronage, with all its sudden starts, its reversals, its surges, is the most moving of this bitter past.

Omitting from consideration the declamatory style which for a number of essayists was the favorite genre in studies of the past, this major question in our history has been approached only tentatively. Actually there have been a handful of studies on marronage. Their authors without recourse to primary sources contented themselves with exposing and analyzing the then-meager, largely incomplete statements of historians whose greatest merit is that, with diverse inclinations and at times equally burning passion, they left us the basis of a history yet to be written.

This business, this love of rehashing, scarcely helped advance the study of marronage which, on the contrary, engulfed itself in chauvinistic and sterile verbiage. On the subject of marronage and slavery in general, the needed light can come only from new sources, sources other than the notes already sifted and resifted, notes still inconsistent or of no major relevance to historical truth. If we are to make headway, to stop titillating ourselves with couplets about "sublime Maroons," there must be instituted a methodical examination of many archival dossiers, minutes of Saint-Domingue notaries, contemporary newspapers, plantation and slave-sales records, work-gang rosters, and the very rare bills of lading of slave ships. Clearly indicated is a long, exhaustive task requiring, no doubt, a team effort. We mention this as an appeal for research and also to reduce the study proposed here in all humility to the proper proportions of a tentative step forward.

It appears to us that the announcements of flight, the descriptions of Maroons published in the Saint-Domingue newspapers can shed new light on the practice of marronage and at the same time on the face of the slave. These advertisements include: notices of escaped slaves, the lists of Maroons captured and incarcerated, and notices of public sales of stray slaves. These varied descriptions include height; age; brand and name of slave; national origin; proprietor; place arrested; characteristics; talents or trade; state of health; possible illnesses; the wearing of a necklace or chains by a dwarf; his gait; bearing; dress; language; traces of punishments; blows and wounds; teeth; hair; skin color. No other documents of colonial history permit a more precise approach to the slave. None can better provide information on the origins and better describe the face of the true fathers of the Haitian nation.

Here then is the focus of this step-by-step investigation of marronage and its development upon which the mass of information of all kinds supplied by Saint-Domingue newspapers, in addition to these very precious advertisements, will shed light.

Due to the fact that newspapers did not appear in Cap and Port-au-Prince until 1764, documentation on marronage is more plentiful at the approach of the Revolution. Besides this, the Saint-Domingue press was concentrated in the colony's large parishes and principal sectors: Cap, Port-au-

Prince, Fort-Dauphin, Saint-Louis, Grande Anse, Jacmel, Léogane, Cul-de-Sac, Saint-Marc, Petit-Goâve. Many distant cantons remain in obscurity. Whatever the case, these thousands of descriptions are sufficiently numerous to permit at least a precise idea of our ancestors, of the designations and exact locations of African nations that were the sources of our formation as a people, of this mass of four hundred thousand liberated slaves who, in 1804, founded the Haitian nation. Before 1764, colonist victims of marronage, with a view to guaranteeing their rights, filed affidavits at the registry or, less often, had their rights to the person of the fugitive notarized.

Even after 1764, these declarations are found in the minutes of Saint-Domingue notaries. When Monceaux created the first *Saint-Domingue Gazette* he issued, on 8 February 1764, this invitation to the publication of lists of incarcerated slaves:

Since the founding of the Saint-Domingue Gazette, there has been an apparently lively demand that it carry as one of the articles of greatest value a report on Maroons in or soon to be in the various jails of the colony. The Intendant has, for the satisfaction of the public, consented and in consequence issued orders thereto. Please be sure to indicate as accurately as possible for each slave so specified name, apparent age, nation and brand.

An ordinance of the Intendant dated 26 March 1764 announced "the establishment of three chain gangs to which the Maroons of the various sectors will be attached: one at Cap, one at Port-au-Prince, and one at Saint-Louis." The value of these descriptions, as well as the organization of the jails for the Maroons, correlates with the major anxiety of the colonists. That is to say that from its earliest days the *Saint-Domingue Gazette* was able to devote a special section to slaves brought to jail.

These announcements appeared so useful that the colonists on their own initiative also demanded of the *Saint-Domingue Gazette* the publication, beginning the end of February 1764, of the first notices denouncing slaves in marronage, with their descriptions and all details pertinent to their capture. In 1767, the Royal Ordinance of 18 November made it compulsory to publish in the *Affiches Américaines*, the name to be carried by the colony's gazette,<sup>5</sup> names and other descriptions of unclaimed stray slaves to be put up for sale. This information was to be published "two months before the sale." In Saint-Domingue, the first notice of slave sales is dated 10 August 1768.<sup>6</sup>

Of the three types of announcements relating to the Maroons, those which concern the sale of stray slaves and the lists of captured fugitives were published by fiat. Announcements of runaways were in fact made with the approval of the white proprietors or the black or mulatto freedmen. In general, once alerted of such flight, the manager of the plantation usually set in motion a roundup (*battue*). When this proved fruitless, the colonist had no other recourse than to describe the fugitive—an action that was obligatory only during the last days of colonization. This was done through the medium



of announcements in the press, sometimes by declarations before a notary or before the court clerk in guarantee of his property rights in the event of the Maroon's being captured,<sup>7</sup> as we have already indicated.

It goes without saying that, however imposing the number of Maroons in the runaway advertisements, they could not reflect a valid percentage of the number of Maroons within the servile masses. The implication is that for a correct estimate it would be necessary, perhaps, to double, if not triple, the numbers of Maroons declared by the masters, and in addition those fugitives not denounced by colonists in the outlying districts. Also, there was a large number of unregistered slaves whose flight their masters could not publicize without at the same time betraying their possession without legal declaration, as well as a large number of runaway slaves pursued only in organized hunts, those who were hanged or buried alive as a means of punishment and, finally, those killed by the police or devoured by dogs in the act of capture, all kept *sub rosa*.

The colonists who resorted to these runaway notices usually did so during the week or month of the slave's leaving. Sometimes six months, a year, or even several years afterward<sup>8</sup>—the fugitive having been spotted in some quarter of the colony according to reports coming from neighbors or acquaintances or some slave suspected of being the wanted fugitive—the search would be renewed and the trail picked up again, not always an easy feat.

In general, most of the announcements of runaways generally include name, brand, national origin, sometimes height or age, all indications recommended by the administration when it was decided to publish descriptions of slaves in jail. The descriptions are laconic, especially those relating to newly imported slaves:

- Marie, an Arada, Marcadet brand on both breasts, belongs to Mr. Gouson of Cap.
- Newly arrived slave with only ship's brand.
- Abroise, creole, 5 ft. 3 inches, no brand, escaped from the Delaville plantation at Saint-Marc.

By contrast, other announcements are crammed with information as is this anguished appeal from Larchevêque Thibaut, repeated month after month in 1783:

A griffonne, Fatine Diay or Daine, daughter of one Fanchette known as Fanchette à Doré, Free Negress of Savane de Limonade, said griffonne formerly belonged to Doctor Polony, has no brand, is light-skinned, thin, nice body. Neither pretty nor ugly, oval face lightly scarred by smallpox, very small eyes, bright and wide awake, rather sharp nose, full somewhat bulging lips, fairly thick, frizzly eyebrows, shapely forehead, very small thin hands and feet, walks with head high affecting the manners and tone of a Free Mula-



tress, loves to dress well and normally wears slippers on bare feet and is wild about attending the dances of the free colored people or slaves. Anyone coming across the said griffonne, a Maroon since the end of last September, is requested to have her arrested and to give notice to M. Larchevêque Thibaut, lawyer to the Conseil Supérieur du Cap, to whom she belongs. Reward.

How did marronage compare with other forms of rebellion against the system such as individual and collective suicide, sabotage, arson, poisoning and abortions? How was marronage carried out? What were its causes, its evolution? These are the major questions that are the focus of this inquiry. The purpose is to shed more light on the answers and upon certain aspects of the slave trade or on the life of the slave and of the masters—all integrally linked. In short, this is to be a preliminary look at the documentation of slavery.

An examination of slavery, however summary,<sup>9</sup> might seem outside the scope of this work, but it is precisely the absence of such reference that would prove to be a serious omission. Marronage, an open rebellion against slavery, could not be explained without taking into account the general conditions of the system. Moreover, to speak about the cause of marronage without attempting to uncover within slavery itself—whatever the perspective from which one examines it—the real reasons why slaves ran away would be fruitless:

Marronage, in order to escape from what?

From slavery.

Hence, how can we not speak of slavery?

And what at the very onset of this inquiry, must our concern be if not to show who the slave was, how he lived, and why he became a Maroon?

Our hope is that we will have made a contribution however modest, to the history, known or ignored, of the slaves of Saint-Domingue who, it is said, struck out for liberty in the grief-filled land of Saint-Domingue. They were determined to be free. . . .

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1. *Affiches Américaines*, 27 March 1785.
2. *Affiches Américaines*, 21 April 1784.
3. *Supplément des Affiches Américaines*, 31 December 1785.
4. *S.A.A.* 1 January 1785. An aggressive widow would write to the journalist Gate-reau: "If the blows of a stick could be sent by post you would read my letter on your back." (Widow Pommier's letter, *Saint-Domingue Courier*, 7 April 1791.) The same gazette reported with this plethora of crude details the long illness which, at fifty-five, carried off Mr. de Vallières at Port-au-Prince on 14 April 1775: "At about ten o'clock there was an attack of indigestion for which the prompt measures taken immediately produced the desired effect and the General had a bowel movement. . . . The gentle purgative which he took produced the best results. . . . The General was also completely purged on the twenty-first as he had been on the nineteenth. . . ." *A.A.* 1 February, 22 February and 1 March 1775.
5. The name *Gazette de Saint-Domingue* suggested a certain spirit of independence which had alarmed Versailles.
6. *A.A.* 6 July and 10 August 1768.
7. Some colonists would offer Maroons for sale "at the risk of the purchaser."
8. A slave who had been Maroon six years was declared in 1783 and in 1785 "a Carib who has been a Maroon for the last eight years."
9. Gabriel Debien has published in one volume his series of extremely rich studies of slavery in Saint-Domingue.

## II

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### CLASSIC CAUSES OF MARRONAGE



## Through Colonial Eyes

FIRST OF ALL, what were the causes of marronage? Contemporary witnesses have very little to say about this. For them, escapes were due to incidental causes such as hunger, a vagabond nature, laziness, fear of punishment or abuse by some masters. No witness of the period has conceded to the Maroon an ideal or even a need for liberty. Chroniclers and historians have with unanimity stressed that the colonists regarded the slave as an inferior being still at the level of a more or less developed animal, although often he might have been baptized.

They made little differentiation among slave, pack mule, or ox. They were all equal, or almost so, instruments of labor or of domestic service. The black man "was born to be a slave." Slavery was his natural state. It was indeed his good fortune that he escaped the worse destiny of remaining in Africa, a prisoner to barbarous customs with the risk of losing his soul. Such was the general mentality. Thus, it is by way of such conceptions that Dutertre, César de Rochfort, Fathers Labat, Nicolson and Charlevoix, however sensitive to the misery of the slaves, or even Moreau de Saint-Méry, have indicated, in passing, the causes of marronage. They omit, of course, any mention of a basic need for liberty. The actual reports of the administrators of the colony, as well as the correspondence of the colonists, often reveal the same state of mind. César de Rochefort, with a great sense of shame, saw the slave as "a perpetual servant."

As for the slaves or perpetual servants used in the Antilles, their origin is Africa. They are bought there as one would buy beasts of burden. Some are forced to sell themselves and to reduce themselves and their children to perpetual slavery in order to avoid starvation. Others having been made prisoners of war by some local King are sold. . . . If these poor slaves fall into the hands of a good master who does not treat them too harshly, they prefer their servitude to their original liberty. They are timid . . . and are quickly reduced to obedience. They must be kept at their work by threats and by the lash. If they are punished with moderation when they have failed, they are the better for it. Again if they are treated with excessive rigor they run away and secure themselves in the mountains where like poor beasts they lead an unhappy, wild life and are then called Maroons, that is to say, savages. . . .

Charlevoix continues in the same vein with, it must be admitted, some trace of sadness:

Nothing is more miserable than the condition of these people who seem to be Nature's rejects, and the shame of humanity. . . . Deprived of the wealth which all other peoples guard zealously, they are reduced almost to the condition of a beast of burden. . . . Yet, to take them out of so painful and humiliating a condition would be wasted effort it is said for they would abuse it. . . . Strictly speaking it is only the Africans from the area between Cape White and Black Cape who may be said to have been born for servitude. These unfortunates readily avow that an inner voice tells them that they are an accursed nation. The more spiritual ones such as the Senegalese have learned by tradition that their misfortune is the result of a sin by their father, Tam, who mocked his Father. . . . Insofar as intelligence is concerned all the blacks from Guinea are extremely dull minded; some even appear stupid and as though in a daze. . . . These are robots whose springs must be rewound each time one wishes to activate them. . . . Many of these faults may be corrected by judicious use of the whip if by chance this remedy is employed, but frequently it is necessary to start all over again. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Father Labat's account is much the same:

It was only with the utmost difficulty that King Louis XIV, he of glorious memory, pious and wise, was persuaded to permit the first inhabitants of the island to have slaves, finally consenting only after their pressing solicitations for such permission and their having pointed out that this was the one infallible means of inspiring the Africans to worship the true God, and to take them out of idolatry and to make them persevere all their lives in the Christian religion they would have been made to embrace. . . . They must be punished on the spot if they deserve it, or pardoned if considered *à propos*, for the fear of punishment often moves them to flee to the woods and to become maroons, and once they have tasted this life of irresponsibility it is very, very difficult to break them of the habit. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Father Nicolson has this to say:

It is a prejudice widespread in the islands that there is to be found among the slaves no sense of attachment, no intelligence, no feelings.<sup>4</sup>

Abbé Raynal, Barré de Saint-Venant, Malouet, Bryan Edwards, Girod Chantrans, de Wimpffen, Descourtilz and Malenfant have all stressed this traditional similarity of slave and animal. It is only a question of which animal, the plow animal, the beast of burden, or the service animal. Even Saint-Méry, although in his time reputed to be an enlightened man, revealed himself to be marked by the same colonial mentality. His opinions on the African are those of the colonial slave owner:



. . . The conviction of the impossibility of putting an end to slavery would have required that one think only of softening it, of reducing its rigors. . . . Deprived of all education, prey to every prejudice, to all the terrors of ignorance he [the slave] is weak and fearful. Thus, the Mandingo slave even when he has been violently thrust under the yoke is suitable for work in the islands where his lot is improved. . . . The present fact is that the black is in a state of real degeneration compared with the civilized European. Such is their condition that it justifies the argument that for the effects of their degeneration, perhaps the work of centuries, to entirely disappear additional centuries would be required, and as well a sudden merging of cause and will that is difficult to imagine, however attractive this hope might be.<sup>5</sup>

All this is like the same vinegar served in different bottles for laving the wound and the shame of slavery. This is by no means surprising. It is a moral distortion of the times, one which very few chroniclers and historians have escaped—a sort of judgment rooted in a way of thinking by which the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries happily justified the horrors of the slave trade.

In spite of the broadening of their minds and the relative amelioration in slave conditions the colonists never renounced belief in the slave as animal and the white man as benefactor. As late as 1790, for example, a rather harebrained colonist, like those who would venture to philosophize, summarized the colonial mentality in these strange terms:

Let us take a look at the blacks in the vast solitude of Africa where they vegetate in a land almost devoid of culture, without industry, lacking art, laws and civilization, prey to all life's demands, all the excesses of plundering, to the mournful effects of a monstrous superstition . . . in a deplorable, uneasy and precarious existence he awaits the moment when the fortunes of war must deliver him to the cruelties of his vanquisher . . . when a European merchant appears to bring his captive the only help which can save his life and convert the certainty of his death into an obligation to go work the soil of an American isle. . . . The first trader who decided to go bartering, in Africa, trinkets for men, undoubtedly rendered a great service to humanity and certainly rescued from death more victims than the number of deaths caused by European greed on the American continent.<sup>6</sup>

Thus it will come as a surprise that the statement of the causes of marronage, with its piecemeal solutions or its traditional and varied distortions should remain a major problem, a problem which it is important to engage with indispensable rigor and objectivity.

It would be self-deception to study marronage without having unraveled its true causes, or, even more so, to continue to analyze these causes from the perspective of witnesses who are either suspect because of the mentality of their epoch or indifferent to these aspects of marronage or to marronage itself. The causes given by some eyewitnesses or Saint-Domingue chroniclers



are without doubt valid. They are, however, incomplete and singularly limited to only those reactions attributable to people "devoid of all feeling" and "born for slavery." We will examine the so-called classic causes first enunciated by Father Dutertre:

Uprooting, the harsh conditions of slavery (labor, housing, hygiene, food) and, finally, the cruelty of the masters—these are the causes which from the outset provide a first approach to the study of marronage. As for the nature of marronage itself, whether it was an expression of a temporary whim or a real rebellion against the regime; whether it was "grand" or "petty" marronage,<sup>7</sup> forms which throughout the colonization period existed side by side, the secret objective of these stray impulses to escape or of those serious ruptures of the ban could in fact only be related to a continual rejection—in one form or another—of slavery. How dissociate them and why?

Provisional or decisive, the Maroon's rebellion could only prove to be an indivisible, active protest, an evident and common hostility to the conditions of slavery, according of course to the circumstances, possibilities, courage or temperament of each Maroon. That is why, without veering into a preliminary determination of the slave's search for a breath of freedom or for liberty itself, it is important above all to disclose the causes of marronage. Besides, these causes can serve to indicate in large measure the very character of marronage and its actual tendencies if indeed the latter, however unprecisely, reveal themselves by the light of the "descriptions," as the most enlightening of all the documents on marronage.

## The Uprooting

WAS THERE for the slave a real difference between the African environment to which he was born and the conditions of climate, labor, housing, food and language he found in Saint-Domingue? Did he, just on these considerations alone, suffer confusion and disorientation?

In spite of diverse origins and cultures the three great ethnic groups which insured the settlement of Saint-Domingue—Sudanese, Guineans and Bantus—offer certain basic traits in common which, against a background hardly affected by occasional special characteristics, formed strong lines of contact and influence. Over the centuries these have in turn marked the peoples of this vast geographic area extending from north to south along the western coasts of Africa.

Generally, the climate is almost the same, hot and humid the length of the coast, and correspondingly cooler in the interior as the altitude increases. This climate, compared to that of Saint-Domingue, did not involve a marked change. Without doubt, it was not difficult for a slave from the Gulf of Guinea or from the Angola coast to become acclimated in the colony to a shorter less abundant rainfall in scarcely different surroundings. Father Nicolson has supplied precious and precise information on the climate of Saint-Domingue:

Usually Mr. de Réaumur's thermometer climbs from about 22 to 23 degrees above freezing at 6 A.M., at 10:30 from 23, 24, 25 and 26 degrees; at 5 P.M. from 23 to 24 degrees, at 10 o'clock and throughout the night, from 22 to 23 degrees. . . . The temperature in the other sections is almost the same as at Cap. . . . The heat is more noticeable on the plains because the sun's rays fall perpendicularly there; the mountain ranges block the action of the rays and conserve the earth's humidity for a longer time. . . . The coolness of some of the mornings there is quite like that of a European springtime. From May to August the rains are normally heavy at Cul-de-Sac, Port-au-Prince, Léogane, on the coast at Nippes, at Grand Anse and in several other sections. . . .<sup>8</sup>

How then can it be claimed that climate was a factor in uprooting? No doubt, uprooting as a reaction did exist, but for other reasons more emotional than physical. Isolation, for example. This will become evident. As for the kind of agricultural work, diet and housing, the excesses and inadequacies



of the colonial system apart, the overall change was not a vital one. The imported slaves came from regions where agriculture and stock farming were, from time immemorial, the major activities carried on with detailed variations in customs. In general, there were the identical custom of scorching the land, the same agricultural tools, and a soil of similar composition.<sup>9</sup>

From this point of view, the slave experienced no sense of being uprooted. Dr. Price-Mars writes:

Brought over to Saint-Domingue, he came with his rudimentary skills and his familiarity with the tools of labor. Consequently, there was little change in his contact with European techniques applied to the Antillean milieu: the clearing of land with an ax, its parceling out with hoe and machete. A less pronounced earthward bend of the torso helped him improve his control of the hoe with its wider blade and longer haft than in his native land. In other respects an easy acculturation so far as occupation is concerned, since almost the same types of tools were used. Besides, work methods were quite similar. Back home, collective or team labor in cooperation with family groups. Here, group but forced labor under the strict discipline of a driver (*commandeur*). Also different were the types of agriculture: here—tobacco, indigo, sugar cane, coffee; there—almost exclusively harvest crops: oil palms, millet, plantains, the production of tubers, principally yams. From the point of view of material and technical acclimatization the change from one environment to another was not, it might be said, very marked. It was simply a matter of becoming used to the constraint of the harsh, inexorable discipline of the colonial scene. . . .<sup>10</sup>

On the colony's plantations and in the factories a diet based on corn, millet, yams, manioc, sweet potatoes, roots and rice scarcely differed from the habitual fare of the slave, not to mention the use of the plantain and red beans which the Congos established in the colonial cuisine. In Africa, the Senegalese lived on manioc, corn, rice and millet. It was the same with the Soso of Guinea, the Dahomey Aradas, fond of *accasan* and *doucounou*,\* the Ibo and many other "nations." This will be elaborated on in the chapter on slave diet.

By contrast, the slave's feeling of isolation could arise because of language, the frequent problem of making himself understood, and because of the shock of finding himself snatched from his family, from his distant fatherland, amid brothers and sisters not really such, being of unknown "nations" and dialects, and greatly lacking the interdependence of the creoles and the creolized. These latter were always ready to heap with jeers the *bozals*, new arrivals who, as they tried to express themselves, could only speak broken creole (*parler langage*). In addition to the chains, there was indeed a unifying

\* Accasan: corn meal mush eaten with cane syrup. Doucounou: corn meal cooked in plantain leaves with brown sugar and coconut.



bond. This was the Creole language, but fluency for the slave required a long apprenticeship.

Was it really a language based on African syntax and French lexicon, born of the need for communication between slave and master? That is the popular opinion confirmed with authority by Suzanne Sylvain-Comhaire but contradicted by the staggering observations of Jules Faine. For all that, this passionate linguistic debate has not yet been resolved. Actually, Sylvain-Comhaire detects in the formation of Creole a "predominant" African influence deriving from the contribution of the Eburnéo-Dahomian group of languages making of our popular Creole "a French molded in an African syntax . . . a Ewe language with French vocabulary."<sup>11</sup>

Jules Faine denies "the influence of West African languages on the structure of Creole" and characterizes it as an "essentially neoromance language in the formation of which the slave element was virtually inoperative, contributing nothing to the structure of Creole languages."<sup>12</sup>

As is known, Jules Faine is committed to demonstrating the striking similarities between Mauritian and Haitian Creole, "twin offsprings from a single egg," concluding that only the French-speaking colonial could have created Creole, since the language is found to be the same in Saint-Domingue and Maurice, two islands separated by a considerable distance. Moreover, there is not the slightest contact between the two,<sup>13</sup> while the peoples of that distant Pacific isle had no other language than Malayo-Polynesian, and the Africans brought to Saint-Domingue knew only some very different languages of West Africa.<sup>14</sup>

Avoiding the temptation of considering myself a linguist, and while waiting for the debate to be weighed and settled by a serious inquiry headed by our School of Ethnology, I do not believe that Creole, a communications need for two peoples of different languages, could have been in any way the monologue of a group systematically deforming its own language in order to create a new one—a language miraculously understood by another group which had remained mute.

Apparently, simple logic stands hesitant before such a phenomenon—a language with syntax and vocabulary essentially African, yet essentially a neoromance language. Without doubt, the contributions of both population groups were brought to bear on the problem of finding a means of communication. There yet remains to be determined the influence of each without ignoring the input of the Spaniards, the English, and of the Indians who inhabited Saint-Domingue and who combined the misery of their last survivors with that of the Africans brought to take their place on the island. In any case the question remains open. The colonial texts we have seen, such as those of Malenfant, Descourtiz, or Moreau de Saint-Méry—together with those from the period of Independence coupled with old songs dating from the beginnings of the Haitian community—permit realization of an appreciable evolution of Creole, so much so that today's Haitian would perhaps

find it fairly difficult to hold a conversation with Toussaint-Louverture, Dessalines, or Pétion, and even with compatriots from the days of Boyer or Soulouque.\*

Clearly there is a need for the study of the origins and evolution of Creole. As it is with the songs from the earliest days of the Haitian period the oral language of the slave transmitted, it is true, by the colonist and having thereby undergone changes, appears to us closer to the "Frenchified" Creole of Martinique with its "old France" phrasing and expressions which today have disappeared:

*"toute bitation outi y en a passé 40 nègres"* (Outi more latterly became *côté*.)

[every plantation where there are more than 40 negroes]

*"guetté-li [look at him] for gadé-li; li sale trop moi dis vous; guetté li, bonda li à l'air"\*\*\**

(taunting of bossales by creole Africans, reported by Descourtilz:<sup>15</sup> *"maître a io batte io pou grand merci"* (*gréméci*).<sup>16</sup>

[Their master whipped them for nothing.]<sup>17</sup>

*"Moi bien connai souif a yo pas senti pièce."*<sup>18</sup> [I know very well that they don't smell at all.]

*"Paix bouche à vous."* (*Pé bouche ou, ou féminin: fermer bouche-ou.*) [Keep quiet.]

*"ioun maman poule qui grasse oui."* [O, that's a fat hen!]

Only the expression *maman poule* survives in our present speech. And currently we no longer say *papa cochon* for the male pig or *papa boeuf* or *mama boeuf* as in the colonial days to designate bull and cow.

*"Si nous gagné grand gout"* for *"si nous gain"* [If you are hungry]

*"Procureur, li mentor trop"* [The lawyer is a big liar]

Rereading the "Song of Evahim and Aza" (slaves on Plantation Pélerin des Cayes) or the Creole songs, among them *"Lisette quitté la plaine"* reported by Saint-Méry, the differences are still further accentuated when the "old France" phrasings are compared with the Haitian Creole of today.

Whatever the known evolution of Creole, and every language has its evolution, there is discernible borrowing of African terms<sup>20</sup> and words inherited from Marcorix; Spanish and English, as well as an enormous French influence—all passed into the spoken language, particularly the French with its typical expressions and turn of speech as it was spoken in the colony.

\* Haitian presidents: 1818-43 and 1847-49.

\*\* "He's too dirty, I tell you; look at him with his bare ass showing."



A reading of the Saint-Domingue press over a thirty-year period reveals striking examples of this special vocabulary which profoundly marked Creole and lies at the origin of numerous Haitianisms. Words and special expressions peculiar to Saint-Domingue thus continue their existence in today's Haitian speech. Examples:

*l'entourage* (clôture), *caloges* (cages), *rechanges* (vêtements), *hardes* (costume, rades) *éperlin* (piège, perlin), *mitan* (milieu), *vaisseau* (récipient), *gourdin* (fraction of a *gourde* coin) *jardin* and *habitation* (parcelle cultivée and plantation) *petite place*, *grande place*, *raque*, *petit mil*, *fistibal* (fronde) for *fustibale*, *cambruse* for *brevette*, *mulet pote*, *bourriquet équior*, *bois debout*, *gravé de verrette*, *poule zinga*, *un cheval gris-pintade*, *négresse vaillante*, *seins debout*, *à toute bouline*,<sup>21</sup> *merci en pile*,<sup>22</sup> a plantation *battante à l'eau*, another *colloquée* (located) next to a large river, *il se lote* a beautiful necklace. . . \*

This influence extends even to the customary style of simple advertisements to the point that the style of these announcements has become a habit, a singularity to which we continue to cling.

Gone Maroon a mulatress named Manon, twenty-five to thirty years old; she lived in Cap at Lady Cotin's where she learned her trade as midwife.

"Restoit" is to be translated as *habitait* (lived). The word *reté* remained in the language as did *mettez-vous* for *asseyez-vous* or *brigand* for *turbulent*, *actionnaire* for *téméraire* (bold), *monter en haut*, *descendre en bas*, *reculer en arrière*, *allumer la lumière*. . . \*\*

The said African, Free Negro of Port-au-Prince most humbly entreats businessmen, captains and merchants to extend no credit to the said widow Jean Phillipe Vertillac presently his wife who absented herself from his home several days ago, declaring that henceforth he will not pay her charges.<sup>23</sup>

Time has not effaced from our journals these indiscreet extravagances nor, taking a cue from the unforgettable J. J. Audain, those liberties taken with the grammar, syntax and spelling of our borrowed language. Which of us has not at times stumbled along the difficult route to translation of our Creole thinking into French?

It is, however, fortunate that this rather weighty colonial legacy attached to our speech has in no way prevented the flowering in our letters of so many works of such great integrity of expression that in no way mar the defense

\* For sale by the piece.

\*\* Climb upward, descend down, retreat backward, light the light . . .

or glorification of the French language.\* And that our essayists, poets and novelists continue to enrich our fidelity to the incomparable French culture.

It is especially fortunate that our contribution has not in the slightest lost its originality and its emotional power nor the essence of our "Negritude," of our "Haitianity."

After language, the burning question which comes to mind is that of slavery itself. Although some captive victims of slave raids experienced their apprenticeship in slavery in Saint-Domingue, some of those carried off in the slave trade already had experienced slavery and the debasement of a similar condition. Hence it becomes a matter of interest to compare the practice of slavery in Africa and in Saint-Domingue so as to determine if, for these transplanted slaves already acclimated to a condition of servitude, there was any reason at all for that reaction to the uprooting, which we consider to be one of the causes of marronage.

Let us immediately state that marronage, inseparable from slavery, existed in Africa as in Saint-Domingue, although in Africa the servile state was a traditional social pattern very much different, in spite of its cruelty and its identical organization, from the excessive expenditure of energy daily required at Saint-Domingue.

If slavery in its very essence did not forbid it, it would not be inappropriate to speak of paternalism in general in Africa. At any rate, even the forced labor in Africa had never assumed the infernal rhythm with which it was stamped in Saint-Domingue by the competition for wealth, the insatiable appetites of the colonist, his overriding scorn and his base prejudice.

Documents on slavery in Africa tell of slaves well treated, living as part of the family generally. The atrocities—for they did exist—victimized not "natural" slaves but rather prisoners of war, criminals, offenders against the common law. Such, in every case, is the image generalized by the known documentation.<sup>24</sup> If the colonial slaveholders received from Africa an organizational model for slavery and practical methods for the total submission of the slaves that it was to their interest to adopt in order to guarantee the security of the colonies and the discipline of the labor force, there was always for the slave in submission to a white European, a different blend of the tribal tradition. A thing inadmissible, this difference between a master of his own race and this new master. The African master was likely to be imposed upon him according to the fortunes of birth, wars and conquest among brothers of the same blood. The white master substituted force for tradition and in addition imposed a rhythm of labor to which the slow tempo of African life had not accustomed him. Some respected this master of another race because of his "providential" color; the majority, according to the slaves, were for the same

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\* The reference is drawn on *La Deffense et Illustration de la Langue Française* written in 1548 by one of Ronsard's pupils, Joachim du Bellay. In it he sketches and extols the scheme of the new poetry that Ronsard, drawing heavily on Latin and Greek forms, had fashioned.



reason "afraid of being eaten" by this white man. At least these were the largely unsupported statements of contemporary witnesses. They may be considered to be founded on fact although, to repeat, the organization of slavery in Africa appears in its broad outline to depend on the same system as that adopted and singularly complicated with abuses and atrocities by the colonists.<sup>25</sup>

We have at hand as a quick reminder of slavery in Africa an apparently detailed and conscientious study of slavery among the Toucouleurs. Their system being no different from the customs observed in West Africa with respect to slavery, especially in the slave trade area, this reminder will pertinently encapsulate the scattered documentation available on African slavery during the days of the trade—and even on its present-day survivals, modified and softened, it is true. Here is a significant extract from the study of Yaya Wane:

The Toucouleur slave population is apparently still sizeable but in the past it was certainly larger. According to certain estimates the slaves outnumbered all the other castes combined. Formerly, slavery was in fact more absolute and irreversible, certain well known families having owned as many as several thousand slaves. If prior to abolition the slave wished to put an end to his condition—and the opportunity to buy freedom being unavailable to many on account of high cost—the slave's only recourse was marronage. But in the majority of cases the slave's flight would end in recapture and consequently in a simple transfer to a new master. For in any case the fugitive had to cover a great distance if he were to regain his native land as it was very likely far away, not to mention that the runaway did not know the route nor at times the local language in which he needed to inquire about the route; it was particularly this ignorance which quite rapidly brought him or her to the greedy attention of other kidnappers. One must realize that in addition to the almost irreversible nature of the slave condition of early days wealth formerly consisted essentially in slaves, in the sense that the slaves were the unpaid producers of this wealth. To amass these riches it was then necessary to own the greatest number of slaves which were also cash money both for acquisition of land and cattle and for matrimonial exchange.

This considerable and universal value of the slave in Toucouleur society made each person a potential slave. For there was never any hesitation in one's village to make off with someone weaker in order to sell him. In addition, by this convenient means, one could get rid of a political adversary or even an encumbering relative. All that had to be done was to deal with professional raiders and to lull the suspicion of the future slaves. They, not knowing their fate to be already sealed, accompanied those who would sell them to an apparently innocent spot, but one arranged in advance with the kidnappers. The latter had only to go into action, pay the recruiting merchant, and leave. In this way in a single day several people would disappear, and when this was noticed it was generally too late, the victim being already several leagues away from the village. The irreversibility of the slave condition, greed fanned by his universal monetary value and the social jungle of

the period—such were the major reasons for the continued increase in the numbers of the servile caste.

On the other hand, warfare served constantly to reduce these numbers since the slave was also a conscript of choice. If war drastically reduced their numbers, the social consequences were negligible. Conversely, if the slave proved victor and thus earned his liberation, the vanquished replaced him in the chains. . . . Wars channeled to the Fouta many slaves of diverse origins: Bambara, Malinke, Sarakelle, even Wolof.

Both the diversity of these geographic origins and their familial and social instability serve to explain the absolutely limitless and confused surnaming of the slaves. They were without differentiation integrated into the patronymic clan of their master, which they could frequently change or they would keep the patronym of their original ethnic group, or else adopt a fantasy name to hide this servile origin and try thus to free themselves of the infamy of the slave condition. It follows that due to their social instability and their diversified origins the slaves did not have, strictly speaking, specific traditions. Formerly, without doubt, every collection of slaves having any numerical importance (for example slaves of chiefs with royal grants, fiefs or provinces or even slaves of outstanding families) usually had its own *jagodin* appointed to it by the master. The *jagodin* was, after a fashion, the head of a collective of slaves over whom he had some ascendancy. He was responsible for general surveillance and distribution of tasks, as well as for questions relative to equipment and stewardship. The *jagodin* acted in the name of the common master, gave daily reports to the latter at the same time that he received instructions, and reported on slave complaints. The *jagodin*, however, remained a slave like the others in spite of certain privileges attached to the function. As soon as he ceased to have the confidence of his master, he was divested of his function. It is likely that a loyal and irreproachable *jagodin* through the quality of his services and his conduct was at long last duly recompensed by the master who decreed his freedom.

With respect to labor, the slaves acquired only the specific professional skill which the master saw fit to assign them. Whence the almost limitless range of labor, the slaves being cultivators, butchers, grooms, bodyguards, masons, carpenters, and so on. And if it is true that labor depends naturally and by social definition on the universal competence of the slave with arms of steel, they were in addition available for many other activities. The earlier slaves with specialized skills could freely practice regularly those skills which they had learned and transmitted to their descendants, but only at a much later period. Yet they could not take advantage of these skills to escape their servile condition. Insofar as they were in a way comparable to any kind of personal property, slaves could neither own nor inherit. Should the case arise, they were on the contrary an integral part of the heritage, transferable upon the slightest occasion, whether as part of a regular sale or as a free gift or whether again because they entered into the composition of some matrimonial allowance. The monetary value of the slave was invariably fixed at the rate of five cows in default of which a thoroughbred horse would suffice. Thus, it used to be that to gain a wife's hand one had to be able to give in compensation at least three slaves. It is only with the scarcity of slaves that



cattle (fifteen cows) became acceptable. . . . At present the Toucouleur dowry has become completely monetary. . . . Currently it is noted that . . . consent of the master is still required for slave marriages. . . . The master has priority option over the children born to the ménage. . . .

In the traditional Toucouleur mind there is no distinction between the informally enfranchised (Daccanaa Be Allah) whom the masters have voluntarily renounced, and the libertarians (taJBeBoggi) who no longer acknowledge any master and the freedmen who have duly paid up the cost of purchasing their freedom (open to debate between slave and master). The old official price: one horse or five cows—presently it is from five to thirty-five thousand francs CFA, payable in regular instalments. . . .<sup>26</sup>

Only the designations have changed. Marronage in African slavery is called *dogde* among the Toucouleurs; the freedman, *sootiiBe*; the driver, *jagodin*. The others are the same. As in Saint-Domingue, the slave is personal property which the master may dispose of at his sole convenience as he would money or a beast of burden. The rules for enfranchising, including liberty *de savane*, the collective patronymic, the branding and so many other methods, seem to be absolutely identical.

Did Africa herself invent all her tradition of slavery, one of the oldest institutions of mankind, in its long trek to civilization? And Europe—did she have need of models other than her own centuries of feudalism?<sup>27</sup>

To be remembered are the descriptions of slavery in Gaul and the accounts of the character of feudalism in France with masters and slaves, commanders and serfs and the horrors of a regime bringing specifically to mind the colonization of Saint-Domingue.

. . . This territory belongs to a single proprietor and it is as big as the land area of a town. The residence of the master is located toward the middle of the area; at some distance and all around extends a ring of little villages where a group of slaves belonging to the same master live. Among the slaves some are busy with farming, others at various jobs in the manufacturing carried on in the area. At the head of this group of slaves there is an overseer who has the most absolute power over his subordinates. No slave ever worked for himself. He did not even work as a single unit. He was part of a group, a stable; each morning with the group he went to whatever part of the land was indicated by the chief; the next morning he would go to yet another location. He invested his work with neither interest nor personality. Fed and clothed, each day receiving his ration of flour and wine, and at the start of each season his clothing, he had nothing to gain or lose. Whatever he sowed, another slave reaped. His labor was without recompense as it was without love. This slave didn't even enjoy his own hut—he only shared a common dwelling; it was not only liberty of which he was deprived, but in addition a roof of his own.<sup>28</sup>

These texts suffice to highlight the solid European experience in the

practice of slavery and to again suggest the prior experience with perpetual slavery and its methods which certain captives brought to Saint-Domingue could have had in Africa. Whatever the case, and in spite of eventual similarities, it is reasonable to consider that uprooting was one of the causes of marronage. This was not the view of Moreau de Saint-Méry, who wrote:

There is too much analogy, even resemblance, between the natural products of Africa and those of Saint-Domingue to support the idea that the sight of these latter caused great astonishment among the slaves when they debarked.<sup>29</sup>

Saint-Méry, addressing himself to mesologic influences, considered only one very limited aspect of the question, thus reaching hasty, superficial conclusions.

Lacking any improvement in his lot as was undeniably the case, transplanted and thrown on the distant shores of an unknown country with a different language and different mores, separated from his own, constrained to a new rhythm of labor, how could the African not have experienced a sense of alienation, the tortures of nostalgia? Animist that he was how could this slave not suffer trauma upon finding himself, after the frightful confrontation with the high seas, separated from his own, a prisoner to strangers in a strange land with rather different flora and fauna and, especially, new language and customs? Was it not, however tropical, a land of strange forest sounds, with an alien feel to its winds, a land without his old familiar silk cotton trees, his friendly streams?

For these diverse reasons it would appear that uprooting, physical or emotional, was one of the causes of marronage. Underlying this reaction on the part of the slave was his act of desertion even after he had become creolized. These were flights following his sale to another master. The slave did not passively accept being separated from attachments he had made—liaison with a woman companion, friends and acquaintances, possible family—and from his one personal possession, the subsistence garden enriched with his sweat at the price of so much labor.

How then could one deny the slave, however "deprived of sensibilities" he might have been, such a reaction at being separated from his own country, thrown upon a foreign land at the whim of strange masters and constrained to crushing labor without any other explanation of this frightful destiny than the bite of the whip? Whatever may have been repeatedly said about a supposed African tolerance to slavery, about their "good fortune" (*sic*) in that, through transplantation, they had escaped a worse fate than had they remained in Africa, one need only in reply to those corrupt legends refer to the slave's long-lasting nostalgia for his native land. The care with which some of them pretended to have forgot their own language could only have been a perversion due to slavery, a means of escaping the taunting of creole Africans and



a prudent precaution against unduly antagonizing the colonial mentality with its prejudice and overriding scorn for Africa. If indeed this psychological withdrawal existed—and here we will not contradict Saint-Méry—it remains evident that slaves receptive to this mode of general thinking, must have been exceptions.

The proof is that in most of the ceremonies which were the most profound, most sincere manifestations of his state of mind,<sup>30</sup> it was his gods to whom he turned desperately for help. In his distress, it was toward Africa that he prayerfully directed his eyes. The anguished desire of all the slaves of Saint-Domingue was to "return to Guinea" upon their death. So firm, so deeply rooted was this belief in a return that even today in certain Voodoo-like meetings in the country, the Haitian peasants pray for those of their brothers buried back there in Guinea whom they will rejoin in death.<sup>31</sup>

How could this desperate, gnawing cry not signify that Guinea, the symbol of Africa, was, and would remain in their eyes, the image of a paradise ardently wished for and completely different from the hell of Saint-Domingue?

## The Harsh Conditions of Labor

AS REGARDS CONDITIONS of forced labor and the treatment of slaves, there was severe legislation that legalized slavery and, parallel with these statutes, there were practices indulged by the colonists in disciplining slaves, practices that most often aggravated the slave's situation.

Throughout the colonial period the conflict between legal prescriptions and the reality of colonial practices remained latent, with the latter predominating. It is clear in fact that the administration had no desire whatsoever to impose on slave owners rules too considerate of the slaves. It avoided unduly modifying the absolute power of the white master to fully exploit the slave, who was considered a "chattel." Most often the administration closed its eyes to abuses by masters. After all, it was necessary to continue to insure the island's prosperity, which represented a solid fifth of the royal commerce. Colbert and his successors thought only in terms of sugar, indigo, and coffee. The fate of the slave was not a consideration with which they burdened their minds.

The Code Noir, or the King's Edict for the Governance and Administration of Justice and the Policing of the French Islands of America and for the Discipline and Commerce in Negroes and Slaves, in the said country was signed by the king in March 1685. For more than a century it would be the official code of Saint-Domingue for slave discipline, at first very little used, but completed, corrected, and adopted by a long series of ordinances and rules over the years, all with the same objective: the oppression of the slave.

What did the Code Noir prescribe with regard to the slave? First, that slaves were personal property, that they were nevertheless to be baptized and instructed in the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion, exempted from working on Sundays and holy days from midnight to midnight, that they were forbidden to marry without the consent of their masters who then became the owners of any resultant issue.

Masters will be required each week to provide their slaves ten years of age and over two pots and a local half-measure of Manioc flour or three cassavas each weighing at least two and a half pounds or equivalent items with two pounds of fish or other items in proportion and for children from the time of weaning to the ages of ten half of the above victuals.



Masters will be required to supply each slave each year two changes of linen and four pounds of material as the master may choose.

Slaves may not possess anything which is not their masters' property.

Masters may when they consider their slaves to have merited same, chain them and have them beaten with rod or whip. . . .

That, in broad strokes was the miserable condition of the slave, upon the order of King Louis by the Grace of God King of France and Navarre. In reality, everything was left to the whim of the masters, and very rarely were colonists criticized for mistreating their slaves.

From the beginning of colonization to just before the Revolution, the slave remained at the mercy of the master and constrained to crushing labor, most often undernourished and dressed in rags. This typecast of the slave is closest to the existing reality, despite exceptions or the relative easing of his condition in the large parishes toward the end of the colonial period.

The slave's workday on the plantation began with the first streaks of dawn and ended at nightfall with a midday break for lunch. It was the general rule but one that was waived by the master for a needed increase in production, either by doing away with the noon meal or by additional work hours at night. During the grinding season, sugar manufacturing in the mills was carried on at night<sup>32</sup> even at times requiring teams for transporting cane to the mills. In any case, special hands were needed for stoking the fires, boiling the sugar, and driving the wagons, in addition to other night workers responsible for watering.

For the plantation and the mill hands<sup>33</sup> the regimen, as can be seen, was pitiless. There is no dearth of witnesses to the abuses they suffered. It is the colonists who provide the accounts. Rarely would a slave have the opportunity to expose abuses. Just on the basis of statements by the masters, the record is extensive and overwhelming. Unquestionably the treatment was harsh. Pierre de Vaissière has selected the most suggestive of these statements to underline the inhuman nature of the forced labor of the work gangs. Writes a Mr. Galiffet in 1702:

Most of the inhabitants make their slaves work beyond the limits of human endurance all day long and for the greater part of the night.

The inhabitants [reports a Mr. Deslandes] treat them with the greatest harshness; they make them work beyond the limit of their strength and neglect their nourishment.

Writing thirty-five years later, an accountant in Cap stated that the lot of the slave was to work the entire day.

Years later, Girod Chantrans would comment on the same inhuman workday on the plantations.

They were all busy digging ditches in a cane field. . . . The sun beamed

directly over their heads, the sweat ran from every pore of their bodies, their limbs made leaden by the heat, exhausted by the weight of their picks. . . . A doleful silence hung over them, on every face the picture of grief. . . . Some commanders armed with long whips dispersed among the workers and from time to time would suddenly lash those who due to fatigue appeared forced to slacken pace, male or female, young or old, all indiscriminately. . . .<sup>34</sup>

A King's Ordinance, 23 December 1785—a century after the Code Noir—vainly attempted to curb some of these abuses:

All proprietors, procurers or managing overseers are expressly forbid to make slaves work on Sundays and Feast Days. His Majesty likewise forbids them to make slaves work between noon and 2 P.M. on week days or mornings before daybreak or after sunset under pretext of emergency labor regardless of what form this might take except at milling time in sugar and other factories and in extreme cases of forced harvests which would require uninterrupted continuity of labor. . . .<sup>35</sup>

If the administrative and military authority also benefitting from slavery managed in respect of its responsibilities to reduce the excesses of the slave owner, this occurred only within the large parishes. Indeed! The outlying cantons regularly escaped this control, which was regularly relaxed, discerning nothing until at last the scandal became too evident. This self-evident complicity thus brought only a derisory amelioration to the great mass of plantation and work gang slaves.

Domestic slaves and certain skilled workers were privileged and, although service animals, had the advantage of a less fatiguing work regimen, depending on the whims and habits of their masters: kitchen helpers, servants, laundresses, hairdressers, house servants, concubines, coachmen, postillions, valets of every kind. Although they were obedient at all times to the slightest wishes of their masters, their task was light and easy only in comparison to that of their less fortunate brothers. For them too the day began at dawn and their bedtime was dependent on the will of the master.



## The Slave Diet

IN THE MATTER of diet the slave suffered even greater abuses. The daily ration prescribed by the Code Noir, that is, the three cassavas, fish, or salt beef, were too often but the subject of dreams. Most often the menu consisted only in a few boiled sweet potatoes and a little water. Malenfant who describes this adds:

At lunch time how often have I not seen slaves without even a potato, without a thing to eat. This happens on all the sugar plantations when the yield from the garden plots is low, then the blacks suffer for months.<sup>36</sup>

However, in the canefields as was still the custom, many colonists planted peas and potatoes reserved for the overseers and resident managers and sometimes corn for the chickens and horses of the whites.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, some colonists resolved the problem of feeding the slave by granting him a small plot of land "in areas some distance removed from the plantation or in back lands near the woods."<sup>38</sup> During rare hours of respite—moonlit nights, at the midday break or on feast days after mass—the slave could plant this back area plot in vegetables or fatten an occasional fowl. Of course, at harvest time, the overseer, the steward or the driver deducted their share of the produce, but the major portion of the crop remained the slave's. Thus he had his own little reserve against inadequate food rations or drought.

For the colonist, this custom was practical and convenient. It could also provide the slave a glimmer of relief. It was worth encouraging. Was it not to the colonist's advantage to feed his slaves as well as he fed his beasts of labor in order to extract greater performance from them? Here again there is increasing testimony to the minimal concern the masters had for the required food allotments. In its mandate on slave gardens the Ordinance of 1785 makes this clear:

Each slave, male and female, will be provided a small plot of land on the estate to be cultivated for their own uses. Proprietors, Agents and Managing Overseers will diligently observe that said slave gardens be kept in good condition; independent of said Slave gardens each proprietor, Agent or Managing Overseer will plant and maintain provisions necessary to the abundant feeding of the work force such that there will always be one-half

in growing crops, the other in stock; all in conformity with local regulations, with the customs of the country and with the varied quality of the soil. In any case the produce of these slave gardens mentioned in the preceding article shall in no wise enter into consideration for the subsistence of the work gang, His Majesty being desirous that the said produce be used entirely for the personal use of the slaves.

These slave gardens were in fact an old custom borrowed from the Dutch. From the earliest days of colonization they are described as ranging from little gardens around the houses to specially reserved sites "of some ten to twelve square feet and separated from each other by a little path."<sup>39</sup> These slave gardens were prescribed toward the end of the colonial period at the same time that the colonists were obligated to establish and maintain subsistence plots (*places à vivre*). In July 1789 a new exhortation by Administrators Vincent and Barbé de Marbois would again focus on the establishment of these produce gardens in conformity with a regulation dating from 10 August 1776.<sup>40</sup> It had been continued in force from year to year because of "the negligence of the colonists":

ARTICLE 1—Each inhabitant will be required to plant on his estate, independently of the slave garden to wit, in the hills and lands where potatoes are difficult to grow, four hundred manioc pits and twenty-five feet of banana trees per slave. If the soil is unsuitable for bananas he will maintain five hundred manioc plants unless there be plantings in sweet potatoes, yams, rice and corn in which case these will make up for the twenty-five feet of banana trees, so that there will always be in kind or equivalent the five hundred manioc plants per slave as before stated.

ARTICLE 2—On the arable plains and on those lands where potatoes and yams are ordinarily cultivated, the Planter will be responsible for keeping under cultivation, independent of the slave gardens, one carreau in sweet potatoes and yams for every twenty head of slaves; in addition one hundred manioc and twenty-five feet of banana trees per slave; if the soil is inhospitable to banana trees he will maintain 150 manioc plants per slave; should it be the manioc for which the soil is not suitable he will raise sixty feet of banana trees per slave; if neither bananas nor manioc can be successfully grown then the Planter will cultivate one hectar of sweet potatoes and yams per fifteen head of slaves. We recommend that insofar as possible every Proprietor, Agent and Overseer give priority to planting manioc inasmuch as it keeps better in the soil, requires less water and during dry spells and ill fortune it can be of greater help.

ARTICLE 3—The Planter's adjoining neighbors who do not have the prescribed quantity of food supply thereby exposing to pillage their neighbors' produce are urged and required to so inform us, either directly or through our Representatives, so that provisions may be promptly and effectively provided.

Under Articles 2, 5 and 6, headquarters of the ministries as well as Militia Captains, Parish Commandants, and other Militia Officers are charged



with making all the needed visits for determining if the quantity of provisions prescribed above has been planted by each Resident, to submit a written report to the Administrators and in such cases where officers through laxity or complacency make unreliable reports they will be severely punished as each case may require, in conformity with the King's Ordinance.

But this comes at the end of the colonial period. Belated concern for the feeding of the slave would not wipe out two centuries of misery, deaths and desertions caused as much by the tortures of hunger as by the hard labor of slavery. An ordinance of the colony's administrators<sup>41</sup> described such ravages caused "by mortalities and desertions" that, despite the increased "arrivals" of Africans, there was a constant dearth of field hands. This was in the South, always the least favored sector.

Perhaps slave conditions improved in the West, in Artibonite, in the North, and around the big cities—a very fragile hypothesis. Evident in the press is the colonists' interest in exploring new food crops. For example, one of them recommends new tubercles, easily grown yams as additions to the millet,<sup>42</sup> sweet potatoes, manioc and corn. "The Circle of Philadelphians" set the vogue for discourses on the feeding and the illnesses of the slaves. Perhaps they were not mere mental exercises or pious wishes.

From the end of the American war and during the early years of the colony's high prosperity, the road to riches over the backs of slaves became a little less cruel, it is said. Slowly but surely the colonist became creolized. Even his cooking came under the influence of the slave's culinary artistry, especially during the long war. Over the years, the masters developed a taste for creole broths, hot sauce, groats, plantains, and red beans, which cooks and house-servants gradually introduced for mixing with rice.<sup>43</sup> Some idea of this can be gleaned from this advertisement of Jeannot, a free black grocer called La France, a Cap purveyor who in 1784 offered the following "at the end of Anjou and Rohan Streets next to the old slaughterhouse, near Bacq,"

. . . all sorts of provisions, to wit, chickens, roosters, capons, ducks, guinea hens, turkeys, geese, sheep, suckling and grown pigs, ram goats, milk and nanny goats, salt codfish, whiteheart cabbage, spinach (giroumons), corn, red peas, callalou root, domestic rice, lentils, onions, shallots, hot sauce, green lemons, sweet potatoes, yams, oranges, jellies and pickles of all kinds, young lemons, plantains, ginger. . . .<sup>44</sup>

It is evident—especially after the American war—that, influenced by black cooks, the colonists gave a local flavor to their cuisine. We describe this simply to point out that just from local resources it was possible to provide ample food for the slave.

Here and there in the colony, absenteeism of the proprietors was the cause of inadequate food supply of the slaves. The agents, managers and

overseers had other concerns than that of providing food for those without whom there would indeed be neither plantation nor prosperity. This aberration is explained by the single preoccupation of the planters' staffs with squeezing administration to the bone so as to reap a higher percent of the profit than the masters provided. It appears that these local administrators did not hesitate to augment their profit by resorting to all sorts of schemes in buying food supplies for the work force. They cut back on the necessary quantities and also on quality, it being clear that spoiled flour, wormy peas, or dry codfish sold cheaply because of poor quality would assure a greater profit margin. For them the essential goal was to secure, by whatever means, the greatest profit, all to the detriment of the slave whose muffled complaints would never be heard by the planters. Nor was the latter's persuasion far different from that of their agents. Alarmed at times by deaths and desertions, the planters occasionally betrayed in their correspondence a concern devoid of any humaneness or identification with the misfortunes of the slave, reflecting instead the pragmatic desire that the beast of labor be fattened so as to increase his output.<sup>45</sup>

It is a plausible hypothesis that this concern lest the chattel deteriorate worked to the advantage of the slave on plantations administered by resident owners. It is even sustained occasionally, but certainly not with sufficient frequency to permit positive generalization. For unfortunately, planters and overseers, by who knows what aberration what derangement of heart and mind, shared the same or similar self-interest and thirst for gain.

To some extent the colonist changed his conception of the slave as simply a wild animal only to see him as a tractable and useful animal even elevating him, at times, to the rank of a clever dog. The slave was still enchained, but the master began to lighten the bonds and to polish the bars. He was beginning to experience a sense of fear in light of the numerical inferiority of the whites and to develop certain protective reflexes. Certainly this was no sign of kindness; it reflected, rather, a prudence brought on by a feeling of isolation in the midst of evidently approaching trouble. In addition, due to some nationalistic quirk underlying the new colonial mentality, the latter felt strongly that it was not for the ignorant metropole to tell him whether or not his servant, his slave, his personal thing must be sleek and well fed.

The favors accorded servants and the women in the plantation manors tended to spread rapidly. Also, the masters found slaves very expensive and becoming more and more so. There was a manpower shortage. It would become worse. Better to treat well those slaves one had by giving them salted provisions and biscuits. A little more care was given the matter of importing flour so as to make up for shortage of provisions.<sup>46</sup> Occasionally there were accounts of colonists who "spoiled" their slaves. But they were very rare, these paterfamilias pictured surrounded by smiling slaves in the bucolic setting of canefields or amid the lush foliage of hilltop coffee plantations. In



no way did they present a true picture of Saint-Domingue, which, for the slave, was a living hell.

Girod-Chantrans, an eyewitness during the latter days<sup>47</sup> of colonization noted that "There is no domestic animal made to work so hard yet so little cared for." The testimony of earlier witnesses is equally telling. That of Father Nicolson, in 1770, for example:

Most of the slaves can be seen languishing in extreme want. . . . Their food is indistinguishable from that given the most unclean among animals and it is seldom given them when their body requires it. Sometimes their day is prolonged as late as ten o'clock at night.<sup>48</sup>

In equally bitter language, another eyewitness has painted the terrible reality of the coffee plantations in the hills.

It is there that cruel neglect and sordid avarice are hidden from every eye; there it is that in the bosom of a favoring obscurity all sentiment is stifled by the pressing desire to become rich. Thousands of unfortunates made veritably stupid and brutalized by drudgery vegetate there in near nudity. . . . It is a considerable walk to the slave gardens and often it is almost sunset before the slave, drained by day long labor, has managed to wield the first stroke of the hoe in his own behalf. Then before going home he must find food for self and family. It is well into the night when he arrives at his hut; a frugal meal does not require much preparation; it does take time, however, to ready for cooking. A scant few hours remain for sleep, that most demanding of needs. At three or four o'clock in the morning the clock or the loud snapping of the driver's whip warns him. . . . Then comes harvest time. . . . For the slave there can be no more hope for rest. Each dawn signals the beginning of tasks scarcely completed by sunset. . . . He must spend evenings hulling coffee beans or emptying wash basins, etc. The first of these tasks is fatiguing beyond description. Finally, there is a continuing succession of painful jobs which hardly leave the slave time for eating and a brief sleep to rest his weary limbs before the new day begins. . . .<sup>49</sup>

In addition to the backbreaking work and insufficiency of food there is the paucity of clothes, inadequate housing and cruel punishment meted out for the slightest infractions. This subject will be further pursued to demonstrate that the regime itself in all of its aspects must have been a contributing cause of marronage.

## Clothing

WHETHER SLAVE CLOTHING was nonexistent or merely tatters, the subject brings to mind the Saint-Domingue colonist whose nieces, newly arrived from Nantes, expressed astonishment at seeing slaves walk about naked. "Why not," he responded, "also ask us to put clothes on our cows, mules and dogs?"<sup>50</sup>

This is no great exaggeration of the colonial mentality whether one is examining practices in outlying districts or in the early days of colonization. Later on, under the influence of the African house-servants, especially the Congolese women, who were enamored of personal ornamentation, there would be competition in dress among the slaves. And though it would be limited by the meagerness of their resources it would yet be sufficient to stir the colonists to restrain this seemingly dangerous form of slave ascension.

Actually, at the beginning of the colonial period, masters were persuaded that the captives, having debarked nude from the slave ships, did not later require protection against the hot climate. Nevertheless, they gave the slave a minimum of clothing to cover his nudity. Dutertre mentions coarse linen knee-breeches and a hat for the men and a fairly short skirt or a quota of cloth for the women. Shorts and loincloths were changed on Sundays and feast days for colored shorts, a shirt and hat for men, chemise and bleached linen skirts for the women. "Having neither shoes nor stockings they all went about barefoot."<sup>51</sup> Children, needless to say, grew up without the slightest bit of clothing and were clothed, boys and girls, only when they reached working age.

Father Labat supplements this information as follows:

Reasonable masters provide two complete changes a year. Others give only one outfit for the entire year or else replace only the shorts or skirts; others take advantage of their freedom to give only some cloth or yarn.<sup>52</sup>

The Code Noir of 1685 aimed at fixing the responsibility of colonists for clothing the slaves, and in Article 25 decreed that "Masters will be required to supply each slave annually two changes of coarse linen clothing or four ells of cloth at the master's discretion." A century later, Article 5 of the Royal Ordinance of 3 December 1784<sup>53</sup> prescribed as follows:



Every Negro slave without exception shall be provided two changes of clothing per year and for males shall consist of a shirt commonly called *vareuse*, and breeches; for women, a chemise and skirt and a shirt for children.

But here again law and practice were in conflict. In their descriptions eyewitnesses generally use such terms as "tattered rags" and "wretched rags" when indeed they did not speak of the slaves as being "completely naked." In fact, the field hand harnessed to the soil under an unrelenting sun, the slave assigned the demanding job of carrying cane to the mill, or stoking the flaming boiler furnaces with bagasse could, for these tasks, be well satisfied with these caricatures of clothing, the simple loincloth or *cache-sexe* which from African days they were accustomed to wearing during their working day. The same was true for the women engaged in the fatiguing work of feeding cane to the mills.<sup>54</sup>

It was quite different on the plains or on the coffee plantations in the hills, where many of them were happy to have these rags and snips of clothing to combat the night coolness and the frost. There were, certainly, more humane masters who, to more appropriately clothe their slaves, gave them that inadequate minimum required by law. In any case, it was the slave who improved his own clothing. Already by 1740 a sharp change in this regard could be observed in the large cities and on the neighboring estates. It was the African creoles and house-servants who, with their tendency to imitate the master's fashion in dress, devoted their meager resources to clothing themselves. There were tailors among them to help in embellishing their clothes with colored buttons and with trimming, the insolent luxury of the menial condition.

The other slaves also followed the movement via the produce of their gardens. They were tired of the taunts of the creoles and the scorn expressed at sight of their "raggedy asses" (*bonda à l'air*). At the Sunday market, slaves, especially the women,<sup>55</sup> sold fruits, vegetables and fowl to buy a few ells of checkered gingham, madras handkerchiefs, a coat, and especially shoes, the first sign of a derisory ascent from the level of the beast of labor. How many working nights stolen from healing sleep would it cost to make a basket, to weave some cord, or cultivate their little garden so as to be able to pay for that first pair of shoes?

The slave women were the first to adopt this line. The creole house-servants or the light-skinned concubines, thanks to their master's absent-minded kindness and an occasional largesse merited in the service of the great house, set the tone for the women of the work gang. The men also went to market, contrary to the custom in many African countries, where this was left to the women.

The Congolese were especially conscious of dress. They were enamored of creole rings and earrings, enamel bracelets, white cotton skirts and the

ribbons and kerchiefs which adorned their hairdress with that art celebrated by Moreau de Saint-Méry. He particularly described the rise in status which in the slave world was indicated by the serious quest, at the price of so much effort, for a certain luxury in dress. It was the woman who in the slave gardens planted pot herbs, cucumbers, melons and pumpkins destined for the marketplace. It was the woman who accumulated the modest savings of those free homesteads or common-law households which were on the increase among men and women on neighboring or on the same plantations.

These gardens which were more accepted, actually encouraged, during the last days of colonization, did assure a relative improvement in the slave's lot. They provided the however limited means for the slave to obtain meat, salt fish and some desired complement to his miserable diet, and, especially, the means to escape from his tatters and rags. These means increased perceptibly—so much so during the last days in Saint-Domingue as to permit slaves of both sexes in the large parishes (and this must always be emphasized) not only the quest but even a pronounced, excessive appetite for this relative luxury that was viewed with so much displeasure by colonists and administration alike.<sup>56</sup>

How could the slave avoid being drawn to the example of the free blacks, the enfranchised mulattoes and especially the women of that intermediary class whose insolent ostentation gave birth to the war of lace and clothing that involved the entire colony in an all-out competition? In 1740 and 1779 the administration attacked the source of this evil, enjoining house slaves and freedmen to abstain from affectation in dress. The Ordinance of the Administrators of the Windward Islands, dated 4 June 1740, specifically decreed:

ARTICLE 1—That all mulattoes, Indians, of whatever sex, garden slaves, and those cultivating the land will henceforth be dressed in conformity with the Ordinance of 1685 and in Vitre cloth.

ARTICLE 2—That all mulattoes, Indians or blacks of both sexes as well as slaves serving masters and mistresses as valets or housemaids, or in their train shall commonly be dressed in Vitre or Morlaix or the equivalent in the master's or mistress' old clothes, their necklaces and earrings of colored glass or silver, and common livery and sandals according to the quality of said masters and mistresses, with hats, bonnets, turbans and simple brazilians [foulards] with neither decoration nor lace, nor other adornment . . . and may not under any pretext whatever wear gold jewelry or precious stones, neither silks, ribbons nor lace.

ARTICLE 3—That all mulattoes, Indians and slaves, freeborn or enfranchised blacks of both sexes may dress in white linen, ticking, printed cotton, *cotonille* or other equivalent cheap materials and similar underclothing with no silk, gilding, ornamentation, or lace unless these latter be of very low value; hats, shoes and simple coiffures under the same penalties provided in previous articles including even the loss of liberty in cases of recidivism.<sup>57</sup>



A government regulation of 3 February 1779, was aimed at repressing the dress of colored people by prohibiting them

. . . to affect in their clothes, dress or ornaments a reprehensible imitation of the dress of white men and women and likewise to wear outwardly any item of luxury incompatible with the simplicity of their station and origin, under the prescribed penalties.<sup>58</sup>

This proscription was as effective as slicing water. Legend has it that the rich black and light-skinned women of Cap who were advised to return to wearing sandals indulged themselves in the luxury of decorating their toes "with diamonds and other precious stones."<sup>59</sup> Even the slave seemed no less clever, within the framework of his or her means, at confounding restrictions of the authorities since some years later, in 1786, the *A.A.* "with the permission of the General and the Intendant" proposed as example an evocative proclamation by the governor of the neighboring Danish colonies. There, the same problem of clothes-consciousness among freedmen had arisen. This document shed considerable light on the identical situation in Saint-Domingue and thus merits being reproduced in full.

Extract from the *Saint-Croix Royal Gazette*, 17 June 1786:

PROCLAMATION. Major General L. H. DE SCIMMELMAN, Governor-General of the Islands of His Majesty the King of Denmark and of Norway, in the West Indies:

We cannot view with indifference the dangerous effects resulting from the extravagant luxury which for some years colored people, free and slaves, have been displaying. This disorder is such that a number of women incur expenditures that are indecent considering their station, and very dangerous under present circumstances. These women spend considerable sums on sumptuous clothes at a time when there is incessant talk of the scarcity of cash, of the difficulty in collecting debts and of the economy which the colonists must observe in their households so as not to contract obligations impossible to acquit. Without shame or reserve, mindlessly without modesty these women devote themselves to scandalous luxury disdaining to seek employ in any useful occupation.

Instead of earning their living decently by devoting themselves to some honest calling they employ every art to obtain from their admirers all that they have in ridiculous apparel. With their prodigality they ruin their families, their every ambition only to surpass the luxury of their peers. They continuously offend with ostentation and vanity. With them jealousy is not a sequence of love; they do not know what love is since they are always available to the highest bidder. For most of them jealousy is but the fear of seeing their rivals attract the price that prospective clients place on their turpitude.

It is not for us to reveal the various deceptions some merchants employ in selling these girls luxury items but we are aware of the abuses which

result from the credit extended them and, to prevent the evil caused by the colored people's pomp and fantasies, we consider it indispensable to limit their luxury by prescribing modest, decent clothing for them. Therefore, by Government decree, and until otherwise ordered we command and order:

1. It is expressly forbidden each and every person of color, free or slave, to wear diamond, gold or silver jewelry except in such manner as will hereinafter be specified. They are likewise forbidden to wear silk and other material enriched with gold or silver, dyed India cloth, cambric, muslins, gauze, fine linen and any kind of fine material and bombazine; any lace, gold or silver necklace, silk stockings, silk-topped shoes, buckles with Strass\* or other stones; any type of dressed hair with or without bonnets and finally any luxury and costly ornament.
2. Colored people, both free and slave, living on plantations and field workers will wear unbleached materials or striped colored cloth; Sundays and Feast Days they will be permitted to wear canvas, *platille*,\*\* calicos and other inexpensive materials.
3. Those employed in private homes and by businessmen will dress as prescribed above. They may in addition wear plain gold rings and earrings ungarnished by stones, coral bracelets and necklaces, imitation garnets and imitation pearls; on head and neck cotton kerchiefs, aprons of the same material, cotton stockings, leather shoes and slippers, plain buckles of copper, pinchbeck, tin, and other inferior metals; all types of gingham, nankins and *calemandes*.† On Sundays and holidays they may use their finer linen and cotton materials plain or dyed, imported calico and silk neckerchiefs.
4. Slaves are permitted to wear such livery as may be agreeable to their masters, as well as old clothes of the masters who are forbidden to permit their slaves to abuse this liberty and thus to indulge in luxury above their station and to play the elegant; for their thefts and insolence derive from this, especially when they belong to people of high position.
5. Freedmen and colored people are authorized to wear not only what is prescribed in the preceding for slaves but in addition all woollens, cotton, calico, coarse lace, nationally manufactured silk ribbons, little gold crosses and similar ornaments for head, arms and neck; plain with no enamel or other enhancement. None of these ornaments may exceed the value of ten pieces of eight (3 l., 19 s., 2 d.t.); cambric and coarse muslin aprons and cuffs, plain silver buckles and all kinds of old clothes known to be previously worn and discarded by Whites.
6. Junior Officers, and Sergeants of the free black militia will wear the uniform as it is presently constituted or as it may hereinafter be prescribed.
7. Those who break the present law will be punished by confiscation of their fancy clothing to the profit of the denunciator and, in addition,

\* A new and very popular type of artificial jewelry created by Josef Strasser.

\*\* Shiny wool.

† Very white linen.



freedmen found guilty for the first time shall be promenaded through the streets by the police and, if a man, exposed in the Spanish mantle, if a woman or girl with the dunce cap, and for succeeding infractions shall suffer enforced punishment by the Captain of the Free Blacks. This punishment shall be immediately decreed without examination beyond the fact itself by the Chief of police according to the nature and demands of the case. Slaves shall be given fifty lashes for the first offense, the punishment will be increased for successive infractions to the number of one hundred lashes.

8. Although we have no design to deprive free people of color of their dances and other similar amusements, we believe it necessary to regulate them in order to prevent the disorder which these divertissements as they are now practiced do occasion. When the free colored people give parties in their quarters they may not invite more than six persons, exclusive of their relatives, unless they have obtained a permit from the Captain of the free blacks who will detail names, occupation and character of the guests. This certificate will then be presented to the Chief of police who will extend or refuse permission to give the party. If it takes place the Captain of the free blacks will send one or two junior officers of his company to maintain good order, to secure more decency and to prevent excesses in food and dress as well as all other contravention of the present regulation. In the event that some disorder is committed, the people appointed to prevent this will summon the guard or police for aid. The guilty shall be punished according to the nature of the case. The man or woman who gave the party will be principally responsible for the infractions.
9. The guards will have the party brought to an end at 11:00 o'clock at night and will require the guests to retire quietly and peacefully, each to his or her own home.
10. Colored people cannot, in any case, circumstance, or pretext assemble for dancing in the same places where customarily whites hold their dances.
11. Colored people who contravene what is above prescribed with respect to dances and other divertissements shall be punished, for the first infraction by fifty lashes of the whip and by a greater number in cases of repeated offense.
12. Residents and other slave owners are forbidden to permit more than ten outside slaves to assemble on the plantation when their work gangs amuse themselves during calinda\* days and to allow these games to extend beyond 8:00 o'clock in the evening under penalty of a fine of ten pieces of eight for each hour beyond the fixed time. This fine shall be equally divided between the denunciators and the poor. Slaves who dare hold gatherings in their huts without permission shall be taken to the Fort and given one hundred lashes of the whip; all those found at such gatherings shall receive fifty lashes. Insofar as fines are concerned, masters shall be personally responsible for infractions their slaves commit. The Captain of the free blacks, the guard, police and all Citizens are enjoined to see to the execution of all contents of the present order

which will be effective beginning this date. Given at St. Croix, May 1786, under His Majesty's seal and my signature,  
Signed (L.S.) (R.) H. De Scimmelman . . . Countersigned: Muller.

We make no comment on this ruling. We have translated it literally. With the permission of the General and the Intendant.

#### FROM THE ROYAL PRESS OF PORT-AU-PRINCE

With regard to slave aspirations for decent clothing Moreau de Saint-Méry has left us an abundance of suggestive details:

A shirt and pants, that was it for the slave and yet there are some who have only the pants. Shirt and pants are sometimes of the same fabric, at other times of different materials. This is already a kind of studied elegance. Long and short pants are another combination. But among the field hands they are always short. . . . To the extent that he is not lazy a slave possesses several changes, and for Sundays, Feast Days and red-letter days shirt and pants are white. A fairly good hat almost always turned down, a finer cloth, the additions of a coat and finally, shoes, for the slaves are barefoot. . . . Such are the varying degrees encompassed by this luxury. To which, however, it must be added that rather expensive kerchiefs on the head, around the neck and in his pocket like some young dandy can cost him more than ten French louis. Often his wardrobe is worth four or five times as much. . . .

For the black woman a chemise, a skirt and handkerchief for head cover comprise the usual dress. But to how many variations is it not susceptible, from coarse Vitré linen of Brittany, Brin and ticking, to Flanders and lawn linen. . . ! Necklaces of gold-specked or plain garnets as well as gold rings are additional ornaments. A fine plain black or white beaver hat or one with a silk or gold band or perhaps gold embroidery indicates an even higher tone, likewise a corset; finally, after the fashion of the whites, a short camisole, then leather mules and sometimes even stockings.

It is hard to believe the height to which a slave woman's expenses might rise. All her glory and one of her sweetest enjoyments is having quantities of linen. . . . It is a great pleasure for them to participate in what they call the *assortiment*, that is, on certain church high days a number of them all dress exactly alike to go walking or dancing. . . .

It is not only in the cities that slave ostentation is so apparent. In a number of work gangs the same slave who wielded tools or swung the hoe during the whole week dresses up to attend church on Sunday or to go to market; only with difficulty would they be recognized under their fancy garb. The metamorphosis is even more dramatic in the slave woman who has donned a muslin skirt and Paliacate or Madras kerchief. . . .<sup>60</sup>

Malenfant also described the slave penchant

. . . for buying clothes and dressing with elegant neatness. . . . Slaves who have some means are always very properly dressed. . . . The slave prefers



to present himself well dressed and to do without things of prime necessity at home.<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless, the same author quite quickly brings us back to the truth about Saint-Domingue where this improvement in dress is atypical, where the nudity and ragged clothing of plantation and factory slaves is general:

The Code Noir required owners to give each slave a hat and two changes of clothing every year. Were one to survey this matter one would be well convinced that there are perhaps two estates in all the colonies where this wise law has been observed. I could even state with certainty that over a ten-year period, before the Revolution, no more than three thousand outfits were distributed by the planters. . . .<sup>62</sup>

This colonist's observation might seem scandalous and exaggerated. It is, alas, confirmed by a long list of contemporaries in Saint-Domingue:

What strikes the European upon entering the colony is the sight of a great number of naked slaves with no other covering than a cloth around the waist.<sup>63</sup>

Nothing is more common than to see them nude.<sup>64</sup>

They vegetate almost nude.<sup>65</sup>

There is also confirmation in the equally categorical observation of Girod-Chantrans who came to the colony in its last days: "Most are naked or in rags."<sup>66</sup> Even if the two changes per year had been regularly distributed they would not have been sufficient due, it must be added, to common fraud in the quality of materials. On this subject a long complaint was addressed to Messieurs Luzerne and Marbois, 22 February 1784:

Ever since the establishment of the colony it has received coarse linens of French manufacture under St. George hallmark, cambours, fougère and grosfort threads. And Virmoutier threads seven, eight and three-quarters. These were good materials for clothing slaves, even poor whites. They were thick, well woven, the same in the middle of the cloth as at the top, and wore well. Today, since the peace of 1783 the national trade sends only sub-standard cloth and irregular threads. . . . There is no choice but to buy these since seldom are any other kind sent here. For the resident owners this infamous cheating bears frightening consequences; the nakedness of the slaves, especially in the hills, is the greatest of scourges. It causes deadly maladies of every kind. The perpetual contrast of the day-long burning sun and, in the sunken valleys, the very cool nights with their humid, penetrating and corrosive dews gives rise to chest inflammation, spasms and swellings ending in death; in the end there is a tremendous loss in slave lives due to forced nudity. Many more than the two changes prescribed by law, even

six, would not suffice. . . . Thus they are always naked . . . exposed to all kinds of illnesses.

This complaint, transmitted to the minister and receiving not the whisper of a response, was aimed at ending such abuses and the constant thievery which victimized both the colonist who clothed his slaves and the slaves who provided their own clothing, slaves "whose already very brief lifespans were even further shortened by this wretched venality."<sup>67</sup>

In every era of colonial life we again find the same verification of the slave as half-naked and in tatters. This was the lot of the great majority. The increasing exceptions were not due to the kindness of masters but to the sweat of the slave swept along by the widespread affectation of whites and freedmen and by a natural, quite African penchant for ostentation and tinsel.



## Housing and Hygiene

WERE THERE, by way of exception, any attempts to improve slave lodgings and what, in spite of its shabbiness, we might call the furniture of the houses? There is little contemporary evidence and what there is only serves to betray how little concern was accorded the idea. However, plantation inventories, some colonial correspondence and advertisements of plantation and factory sales do provide descriptions of slave housing, even if in most cases furniture is treated as though nonexistent.

The *Affiches Américaines* mentions "Slave houses of masonry with three large rooms, houses constructed of hardwood (*bois incorruptible*), wickered, mud-walled and roofed with straw." There is little variation in the descriptions. The type was almost standard. Only rarely did the straw roofing give way to a surplus of shingles for which the master had no other use after having finished the great house and the houses reserved for the white functionaries. Saint-Domingue chroniclers have provided similar descriptions.

Most of the slave houses are fairly adequate. They are usually thirteen feet long and fifteen wide. If the family is not sufficiently large to require all of the space it is divided in two. The houses are roofed with cane leaves, reeds or palm leaves. [Father Labat]

The houses look like dens provided for bears. [Father Charlevoix]

Each house has three doors and accommodates three families; they are roofed with straw, often with shingles. The houses are about thirty feet apart. Near each house the blacks plant stakes for tethering their pigs; as frequently they plant a tree for their hens to roost in. [Malenfant]

Inadequate, unhealthy quarters . . . [adds Father Nicolson].

Were slave quarters a part of a collective shelter or were they, in African fashion, individual *ajoupas*?

The answer is uncertain and open to controversy. Apparently, in earliest colonial times slaves were housed as in Africa in individual units the construction of which was left to their fancy. Thus African tradition linked up with local custom, that is, of the Indians who had always lived in large collective houses of reeds and woven straw grouped in villages. With the passing of years and in response, it is said, to an aesthetic concern the colo-

nists took the initiative to add to this generalized practice the construction of dwellings called slave houses which were no longer *ajoupas* though still "mud-walled and roofed with reeds." They were collective shelters separated by partitions to form a series of houses all part of the same building unit, each designed to accommodate a family or two or three slaves grouped according to space available in each house.

As noted, contemporary documentation has left us descriptions of these dwellings. Plans and other descriptive details appear in correspondence of the era. There is every indication that the practice of erecting these collective dwellings increased to the point that this system of construction gave rise to the use of prefabricated elements with a framework of Pyrenees oak sometimes eighty feet long, or to some other structural formula as revealed by contractors' notices in the Saint-Domingue press. Furthermore, as if to emphasize the increase in the practice of erecting these collective slave quarters, inventories of estates up for sale reflect only this kind of housing, as if individual *ajoupas* no longer existed or else were in no way a part of the outbuildings of the plantations.

Whatever the case, in the absence of more complete information we cannot state that the unsightly structures divided into slave quarters completely replaced the African-style individual dwelling.

One bit of evidence to the contrary is seen in the same advertisements of plantation sales to which we have previously referred. In fact, in many of the advertisements referring to plantations of 100, 150, 200, 300 *carreaux* under cultivation requiring a work force of at least fifty to a hundred slaves if not more, we sometimes find in the inventory of property for sale only three or four slave houses. This is clearly an inadequate number for accommodating a complete work force, since as a general rule each slave dwelling accommodated only two or three families. In the course of a close examination of the Saint-Domingue press of 1764 through 1793, this fact consistently stands out. Sometimes a plantation is described in specifics—one at Limonade, for example, consisting of fifty-four *carreaux* cultivated in bananas and coffee "on which there is only a single slave house," another larger plantation of 144 *carreaux* on which there was only "one house for the master and one for the Negroes." A 144-*carreaux* plantation provided only "one old house of woven slats covered with straw serving as kitchen and lodging for the slaves." At Torbec a coffee plantation of 265 *carreaux* had but a single slave house "fenced and straw covered, twenty feet long and fifteen wide."<sup>68</sup>

What the data indicate is that on a sugar or coffee plantation the colonist consolidated specialized work squads and cadres essential to production in collective slave quarters, as, for example, commanders, mill hands, *grageurs*, stokers, pressmen, and so forth. As for the bulk of the slaves—work hands, mill loaders, oxcart drivers, and so forth—they continued to live in individual *ajoupas*. Often it is this particular type of housing referred to in designa-



tions such as "Caesar's house," the "house of the Negro Zephir," the "house of the slave Julien." The colonist adopted the practice of considering as property excluded from official inventory these miserable structures built by the slaves themselves without directive from the masters. Whether on their own or on the initiative of the colonist or a contractor, it was, in the end, the slaves who would be responsible for construction of the collective-shelter type of housing which in general differed only in meager detail from the African use of straw or interlaced roofing, a specialty therefore not of the masters but of the slaves.

We must, in all candor, add that this documented custom<sup>69</sup> of individual ajoupas was far from being an absolute rule, though it appears with increasing frequency in announcements. As a matter of fact we find many other announcements of sales in which the master's concern for the housing of slaves is evident. We find, in April 1765, "a small holding of thirty acres with seven slave houses," and in succeeding years plantations with "suitable housing" for sixty and eighty blacks; also a plantation of one hundred carreaux with "housing for lodging two hundred slaves;" also "seventy-two carreaux plantation, thirty blacks and ten slave houses." At Pilate there were 180 carreaux, "provisions for feeding 150 slaves, and forty slave houses."

Still, for all of that period, there is equally clear proof of the indifference of masters to personally assuring the living quarters for their slaves. One would scarcely imagine that plantations of 260, 225, 205 or 208 carreaux, no longer wooded but planted in cane, coffee, and staples, could provide housing for the workers needed for cultivation or just for maintenance alone by offering, respectively, "six dilapidated slave houses," "five slave huts," and "three rundown slave houses." The proof lies in the quite frequent examples of announcements of this type referring to some plantation "with provisions for feeding three hundred slaves and housing for eighty slaves," it being implied that once the eighty skilled workers were lodged, the 220 unskilled laborers were to secure their own housing. Or, the reference might be to the plantation whose proprietor "is willing should the buyer so desire to construct slave quarters" nonexistent at the time of sale although this was a rather large plantation. Thus the practice of constructing individual ajoupas was never eliminated. It would perpetuate itself; it would be handed down to the Haitian peasantry who, since Independence, continued to infest rural communities with similar straw huts.

We for our part can envision no other explanation for the existence of a widespread practice which could not have been suddenly improvised upon the death of colonization to then assert itself so rapidly and so widely. The most popular version would have it that the slaves revived the practice of individual huts only after the Revolution, thus affirming, on the winds of liberty then blowing, their opposition to the discipline of collective housing and the barracks "regimentation" fatal to any spirit of initiative or insubordination against the system imposed by the masters. Thus, following this ver-

sion, the need for self-emancipation was also expressed through the medium of housing.

The same phenomenon obtained elsewhere; on American plantations, for example, where Achille Murat, a French colonial turned American noted that "each black has his house, his chickens, his pigs. . . . Each house has a little garden where the slave can plant what he wishes."<sup>70</sup> In any case, this return to African tradition did not appear to have run counter to the objective of the colonist, which was, after all, to get as rich as possible as quickly as possible without pause for any thought of philanthropy. Quite the contrary, it should not be difficult to understand that the master quite happily shed any concern imposed on him by the costly and unrealistic attempt to house his slaves in collective quarters.

All things considered, it is safe to assume that the general practice was to leave to the slaves, whether creole or African born, the task of building their own house. Slaves of the same work gang would work together at the task following the African custom of mutual help (*coumbite*) not only with regard to housing but also extended to include the *coumbite* for individual slave gardens to which all, happy to be together singing and dancing, would bring helping hands for preparing the soil or for tilling, labors too strenuous for one man. Thus the houses became more traditionally African, more and more individual rather than houses designed for two or three families.

These houses were grouped at a corner of the plantation and evenly spaced, thus providing for each *ajoupa* of the little village an area accommodating a tiny garden for melons or pumpkins and aromatic herbs for making tea, a sort of roofless "gallery" serving as an open-air kitchen, an area for small livestock or fowl, and a place for daily ablutions and the bathing of children. The area was also used for washing clothes and drying them in the sun on a line, and for the cleaning of cooking utensils and accessories. It was here that the women performed what was at times truly a ceremony, that is, the art of braiding rebellious short strands of hair in a head style varying with the ethnic origin of the woman, then anointing it with castor oil. It was outside the house at the doorstep really that most of these daily activities, the greater part of living, were carried on during such time as was available. The house itself served as a depot, a shelter against cool winds and rain, and as a place for revivifying sleep.

The houses were built with four strong posts at the corners and four higher forked branches designed to sustain a straw roof. A trellis of reeds was placed all around to which, for walls, dried mud or sometimes terra cotta brick was applied, then covered over with a daub, which the slaves tried to make smooth, shiny, and attractive by the use of whitewash, and sour orange.\* It is not known at what period the roofs, generally low with edges sloping almost to ground level, began to be somewhat elevated permitting the use of

\* The juice mixed in with the whitewash gives a lustre to the coating.

† A pap made of ripe plantains and pounded sweet potatoes.



*galatas*, a sort of attic beneath the roof where reserves of flour, casava bread and corn for pounding were placed in storage safe from rats.

Whether low or high-roofed, the houses were never adequately ventilated. Light and air entered through the usual one opening, the entry door, some five feet high. There were no windows. Should there be one, the slave would wall it in, sealing the smallest interstices in order to keep out cold winds and to protect himself against skulking thieves ferreting about preliminary to attempting some thievery. Also, it was necessary to prevent the invasion of evil spirits walking about at night in search of easy prey, those not under the protection of their "guardian angels" during sleep.

In Saint-Domingue we find none of the conical-roofed, round houses reflecting the instructive tradition inherited by the Haitian peasant and specific to certain "nations"—Guineans from Foutah or from the Mount Nimba area, for example. Here and there in the country areas in the south of Haiti could be found—and these were very rare exceptions—the African-type straw hut artistic in architecture, functional and in good taste. Apparently the slave houses were usually square with straw roof, mud-walled, built on beaten land and made firm with use. It was the slave himself who by degrees adapted this housing style in conformity with his own customs. Besides, the colonist thus shrugged off concern for lodging the slaves, a concern that nevertheless intruded itself. He required the houses to be placed far from the whites, not too far away lest reasonable control be jeopardized, but downwind "so as to avoid unpleasant odors,"<sup>71</sup> especially that of the Angolans who according to the whites "smelt so much like he-goats."<sup>72</sup> The houses were grouped, those of the same family being built around a single large court with about ten feet between houses for the comfort of all and to reduce the risk of "fires facilitated by the straw."

The narrow, ill-ventilated interior contained furniture, wearing apparel, such foodstuffs as there were, several goatskin containers or calabashes, or an earthen jug with the supply of drinking water, and a bed or some facsimile thereof. The slave slept in this one little room with his wife and children or with other slaves, sharing his adversity and becoming his own family. The first meetings among these "shipmates" linked from then on for better or worse would date from their crossing on the same slave vessel.

When it was not beaten earth on which the slave slept, wrapped in a few "miserable rags" or wearing the shreds of the work garment, the slave's bed was usually either a cowskin or a rattan matting which he or she made or, in the South, the "leaves of the palm cabbage serving both as covering and bed."<sup>73</sup>

Malenfant stated that "most infant deaths are due to their sleeping naked at nights on the ground."<sup>74</sup> Some slaves made mattings of corn or cane leaves. When opportunity afforded, the more gifted made use of boards and stakes to construct a sort of elevated footing free of the host of vermin moving about the soil and there, over a latticework, placed a thick mattress of leaves, moss,

and old rags on which they could escape the discomfort of the rugged ground. More than the tamped earth or the matting, this parody of a bed, "frightening to look at,"<sup>76</sup> in any case made it possible for the slave to have a restful sleep free of aches and pain.

Neither the Code Noir nor any other legislation on the maintenance and discipline of slaves mandated a bed. In this regard also the slaves tried to improve their lot. It was up to them alone to devise the complement of items needed for personal grooming, cooking, lighting and hygiene. The wretched yet inspired assortment of household items which thus they put together by their own efforts included calabashes, *couis*, water skins and dishes for drinking and eating, spoons called *sicayes* from the wild calabash tree, sometimes home made straw chairs, bundled plant stems in lieu of a wooden-handled broom, a big water jug; earthenware or terra cotta pitchers, a patched-up barrel,<sup>76</sup> a makeshift tripod of stones on which they would place deadwood for roasting sweet potatoes or corn, for perhaps preparing cassava bread or some scraps of salt fish; pitchpine or other resinous wood for torch-lighting the house, and dried cow dung for smoking out mosquitoes and other insects were other items.

"The most adroit," noted Descourtilz, "decorate their house utensils with varying designs. Without the aid of compass or ruler they engrave their calabash drinking bowls with highly styled designs of pleasing proportions."<sup>77</sup> Other slaves equally skilled knew how to weave baskets or catch-all bags, adding these to the furnishings along with matting improvised from banana leaves, fiber nets, and rudimentary house and table linen.

Actually, it was in the waning days of colonization—an era atop a wave of luxury from which they derived some crumbs—that a few slaves began to acquire practice in these last-mentioned skills. These acquisitions do not provide a picture of the situation of the mass of slaves. Exceptions hardly ever found outside of the large parishes, they serve to point up the irresistible need of the slaves to raise themselves above the level of beasts of burden to a level of dignity such as the master's or closer to that of the house slave.

The African in Saint-Domingue knowingly indulged a propensity for the vanities and niceties of table and household, for dress and ostentation. Despite its limitations this was a natural, even blatant, luxury among the Congos and Aradas, for example. Especially among the women. A propensity for comfort and aesthetics, the need to parade for self-display, to invite the envy of neighbors represented a virtue and a complex handed down to the Haitian peasant. Despite a traditional poverty and by bleeding herself white, she managed, before the days of American occupation, to possess embroidered cloth, fine lingerie, flowered glasses, mahogany platters, glazed jars, a "bench" for jugs; silverplated forks and spoons, colored plates and dishes beautifully glazed, or enameled wash basins, urinals and night pails.

Slaves drawn into the pursuit of luxury within the very narrow framework of their slender means spent the greater part of the income from their indi-



vidual gardens on these acquisitions. This compensated for the callous indifference of the colonist who, with respect to food, housing, clothing or house furnishings in effect said to the slave, "Don't look to me, you're on your own."

With the exception of the assimilated creole, slaves ate in the African fashion out of a common mess bowl, each in turn using a hand to extract portions of *moussa* [a semi-liquid dish of millet or corn] or of *tum-tum*\*—boiled ripe plantains and mashed sweet potatoes,<sup>78</sup> a bit of meat or fish on such fortunate days as these were available. They ate with their fingers, using a calabash spoon as needed. The meal was interlaced with long discussions in the traditional African love for *palaver* and was taken round the fire where the millet or corn was cooking in front of the doorway or inside the house itself so as to avoid the heat of the sun, rain, evening dews or the coolness of the night.

Upon arising in the morning the slave washed his face, rinsed his mouth, then cleaned his teeth with a vegetal brush. He or she could not count on having a more thorough wash up unless he found a nearby irrigation ditch or lived close to a river, cofferdam, or a little plantation dam; or when he could draw upon a reserve of rainwater or use a well he had dug.<sup>79</sup> To this end they took advantage of their days off while looking forward to a lengthy bath in a river or elsewhere. They regularly practiced this kind of personal hygiene. Quite properly and frequently, Moreau de Saint-Méry underscored this desire for cleanliness on the part of Saint-Domingue Africans, especially the women.

When they have finished eating each takes a very large drink of water, the only one of the meal. . . . They wash their hands and particularly the mouth with extreme care. The women especially do this with great care. It is rather common to see them carrying at the end of a soapy vine a small piece of wood which they first crush with their teeth so as to form a sort of brush with which several times during the day they clean their teeth not always as sound, however, as they are white.

Body cleanliness is characteristic of blacks, especially the women. They are always in search of water and even when they are reduced to the point of having no clean garments they regularly take a plunging bath in a lively running stream unless they are reduced to making do with rainwater they have collected or drawn from a well.<sup>80</sup>

Some owners provided medication and sick care for their work crews, sometimes small plantation infirmaries for accident cases or emergency medical services.

The colonist never concerned himself with either bath or "commodes." For washing up, the slave used little wooden tubs into which he hand-poured water, splashing his face, scrubbing arms and armpits and washing his feet and other parts of the body.

As for latrines, no printed document or manuscript of the colonial period

places them next to the slave houses. Debien noted that he found one instance of a latrine near slave quarters, although there was no indication if it was placed there so as to avoid having the odor near the big house. In any case there is no indication whether it was designed for slave use or rather for the white petty clerks so as to relieve the latter of necessity to use the toilets, the night commodes and the chamberpots of the masters.

Constrained to service their needs, like beasts, under the open sky the slaves probably had to resort to their African customs—holes some eight to nineteen feet deep covered over with planks against odors and the invasion of rainwater and surrounded by a sort of straw or mud hut. From time to time quick lime was thrown into the ditch and when full it was covered over and another dug close by. In Africa this type of latrine still exists, brought to perfection in style of construction and comfort, very much like the wooden cases with open seats that the modern water closet has not made obsolete in present-day Haiti except in certain quarters in some large cities.

Toward the close of the colonial period there was evident some slight hope of providing health care for slaves but limited strictly to Cap and to Port-au-Prince. Two private establishments which authorized treatment and hospitalization for Africans were created at Cap. In Port-au-Prince, Mr. Chabannes, formerly a surgeon and assistant medical officer of the Paris hospitals,

continues to take into his sanitarium blacks affected with yaws or other symptoms of venereal diseases as well as *crabes*,\* skin eruptions, ulcers, wounds, etc., . . . whom he will keep until completely cured, a guarantee on condition of payment of 264 pounds per slave, 48 Provence Street, Port-au-Prince.<sup>81</sup>

In the same city surgeon Robert opened a sanitarium at Bel-Air, boasting "the beauty of its limitless vistas over the city, harbor, sea and hills and the clean, cool air of this incomparable site. There are three pavillions for whites at two gourdes, one gourde, and two gourdines daily." People of color and slaves were admitted but only with great repugnance:

As for colored people and negro slaves the minimal care they generally receive when they are sick is completely inimical to the healthfulness of a hospital. Hence the wards available to them are exactly like the third ward for whites. Upon arrival, the negro slave is divested of his or her rags, given a hospital gown, a straw pallet, mattress and bed linen, and the treatment received in no way differs from that given white people. The charge is two gourdins per day.<sup>82</sup>

There was then, in the surrounding barbarity, a faint glimmer of kindness toward a few privileged slaves during the last days and only in two cities.

In terms of housing and health as it was with nutrition and clothing, the colonist exhibited no humane feeling toward the slave. All in all, he appears to have focussed more attention on the pasturing of cattle and mules, on stables for horses and on veterinary care for cattle.



## Cruelty of the Masters

WE HAVE NOT YET touched on the terrible suffering of the slave after his capture in Africa en route to the Saint-Domingue marts or the terrible punishment to which he was exposed from that time on throughout his life—the lash, chains, mutilation and torture—a sadism scarcely to be imagined.

Here again the horror of these daily crimes of the colonists and the slave merchants is revealed not by the slave who had scant opportunity to complain of the cruelties he endured, but by the statements and affidavits of administrators, slave traders and the colonists themselves.

We shudder at the thought that these extraordinary confessions of the white masters may have masked a tragedy perhaps even more bloody and inhumane than that which with such rare cynicism and still chilling terror was openly admitted. Whatever the case, the act of accusation by the executioners themselves forbids contradiction of its authenticity.

Besides, for a long time cruelty and torture, like some last vestige of Middle Ages barbarity, remained current practice in Europe. One needs only recall the typical punishments for witchcraft and the persecutions of the Inquisition or else visit torture chambers still extant here and there in Europe in feudal castles of a recent past.

To repeat, slavery existed in Africa. It should surprise no one that merchants were the main suppliers for slaves. In addition, Moorish agents specialized in this field, as well as petty kings and chieftains who held packs of slaves either serfs by birth, prisoners under common law (sorcerers, thieves, malefactors) or hostages and prisoners kept as spoils of internal wars. There were also odd lots of captives, men, women, old people, children, princes, farmers, chiefs or valets abducted in merciless, organized incursions and raids upon coastal villages and even, when these latter were sufficiently despoiled of their *bois d'ébène*,\* upon villages in the interior. Dutertre tells of fathers who sold themselves or their own children. Sudanese women slaves were fed and kept by North African lords for breeding children who, at the age of seven, were sold to slave traders.<sup>83</sup>

Peytraud published an impressive list of kings and kinglets who for some eau-de-vie, cotton cloth, salt, arms and powder sold slaves on the Senegal

\* Slaves in their prime.

and Gambia rivers, in Gold Coast and on the Sierra Leone coast, in the Arada and the Congo kingdoms and on the Angola coast. It was with these large suppliers that the Spanish, Portuguese, French, English, Danish and Dutch slave traders joined whenever they themselves did not organize the hunts with a well-trained pack of their own agents, brokers and beaters, actual dogs trained to hunt down men.

Thus, coastal towns and villages were depopulated or else abandoned by the inhabitants who were then pursued into the very interior of the vast continent. In his remarkable *History of Africa*, Robert Cornevin tells of captives who despite the weight of chains had to cover more than a thousand kilometers on foot.

To make escape impossible captives were chained to each other by foot with a forked yoke around the neck, a pillory reinforced with heavy wooden pieces. Then began the long trek by night and day to the wharves. Sometimes these caravans moved along for a week or more with only brief halts, loud with the cries of terrified men, women and children torn from their people and drained by hunger and thirst, led to their unknown destiny over long and difficult trails under the constant menace of the most savage tortures. Many, exhausted by these long marches died en route. Their bodies were abandoned to the wild beasts. Others died amidst the horror of baracoons, where these human cattle awaited sale to slave-ship captains. Actually, baracoons, or "trunks," into which captives were packed were huge sheds described as being "veritable cells of putrefaction," locked day and night and reeking with the stink of excrement.

After examination of the slave and complete inspection of his limbs and organs, sales were by lot and conducted amid much palavering, long discussions and sharp bargaining. Inspections went so far as to include the slave's organs. There are even recorded cases of merchants who "sucked the chin" of the slave, so as to divine by their sweat whether or not they were in good health.<sup>84</sup> In general, merchants who were stuck with unsold rejects got rid of them within hours either by killing them or throwing them into the sea. This was their special way of expressing dissatisfaction at not having turned a profit.

Once fully loaded, the ship got under way. The slaves were heaped in the bottom of the hold [states an English slaver]:

On board, these unfortunates are chained to each other hand and foot and so closely pressed there is no more than a foot and a half for each individual. Packed in like herrings in a barrel they generate putrefying diseases and all kinds of dangerous afflictions such that when the guards make morning rounds they have to remove a number of dead bodies and separate their carcasses from the bodies of the unfortunate companions to whom they were linked by chains.<sup>85</sup>

Peytraud goes on to say:



The slaves are chained right leg to right leg and left to left. The iron securing the leg is almost semi-circular in shape; each end is pierced with a hole through which passes a bar that links the various rings that clasp the legs of one line of blacks in the compartment where they are locked in at night, thus it would be impossible for them to come to a standing position.

There are descriptions of cargo overloads that, because of scarcity of space, prevented the slaves from "lying on their backs" or standing. Usually the crossing to Saint-Domingue lasted forty days, sometimes three months. The estimate is that, whether for lack of food and drink or because of having to live in the heat and stench of the hold, conditions beyond human endurance, an estimated 25 percent did not survive the long voyage.<sup>86</sup> Others mounted revolts such times as they were permitted on deck for a breath of air. These rebels were punished by being hung head down from the rigging until dead or else thrashed. Some refused all food and succumbed to grief after long wasting away or, taking advantage of the momentary absence of a guard, threw themselves overboard, at last putting an end to their deep anguish. And the voyage continued, interminably, punctuated with the stifled cries of captives in the endless night of those "floating prisons," those "moving tombs."

Within these sea-tossed, moving tombs, arms and legs lacerated by the irons, unable to see daylight, piled on top of each other, incapable of moving about, glued to the lattice, their tongues hanging out as they struggled for a breath of air, the slaves shared this unimaginable calvary which even now evokes fear and horror.

For the voyage the slaver estimated ten tons of provisions, millet, rice, biscuit for each hundred blacks fed twice daily and provided a drink of water between noon and one o'clock at a rate of one barrel of water per head for the crossing.

Pierre de Vaissière tells of a slave captain who, slowed by contrary winds, decided to kill some of his slaves to feed them to the survivors.<sup>87</sup>

There is considerable documentation of the hellish life aboard slave ships and even of the approved torture which the slightest indiscretion or sign of insubordination might bring. For example: arms and legs broken by iron bars, slaves forced to eat the heart, liver and entrails of their strangled companions, captives cut up and distributed in small pieces, women whipped until the blood flowed and slashed to the bone with knives, slaves strangled and hanged.

Certainly such terrible punishment coupled with the precaution taken aboard ships must have reduced the number of mutinies, or else many slavers very discreet about their shameful traffic must have often omitted relating incidents of slave revolts during the crossing. In his manuscript notes Saint-Méry echoed this:

On some ships the blacks mutiny; the result is a frightful carnage. There are blacks who despite handcuffs and irons that swell their limbs still manage to revolt and to secure the whites with these very same manacles. There are known cases of blacks allowing themselves to die of hunger and thirst after having been beaten back in an attempted revolt.<sup>88</sup>

Peytraud, upon whom we have so often leaned for this summary evocation of the slave trade, published a curious "Regulations" intended for slave ships, a sort of Black Code which here again opened the door to abuses and crimes committed on the high seas, the extent of which can well be conjectured.

Sailors are forbidden to strike the blacks who are usually kept under surveillance by an intelligent, trusty black wearing culottes and a jacket and fed sailor's fare.

If during the night disputes arise . . . self-restraint will be exercised in having the quartermasters impose silence. . . . Whites must not move in among the blacks who could then choke them and seize the opportunity to revolt.

Mornings and nights or before and after dinner they will be made to dance so as to prevent them from becoming melancholy.

Every morning, on deck, slaves will be made to wash their mouths with water and vinegar and with lemon juice, if time permits. And time permitting they will be allowed to bathe two or three times a week.

Fortnightly or every three weeks, the heads and all other hairy parts of the slave's body are to be shaved. This will make them happy inasmuch as it is a custom in their countries. You will also have their fingernails and toenails clipped.

It is customary to avoid vermin by keeping the captives nude. The women alone are to be given a quarter of an ell to cover their nakedness and a bit of linen for body needs.<sup>89</sup>

Finally, let us add that the cargo was reckoned in tons, three blacks being the equivalent of a ton. Saint-Domingue papers listed weekly slave ship arrivals at various ports of the colony. Thus there are available almost complete data on arrivals during the last days of colonization and even here and there, references on importations since the introduction of Africans in Saint-Domingue. While in 1716 four thousand Africans were imported, the figure from 1787 rose to about forty thousand per year. We will return in more detail to the slave trade that so enriched the shipowners of Nantes, Le Havre, La Rochelle and other French ports. Generally, according to *Affiches Américaines*, 70 to 75 percent of the cargoes ranging from 150 to 850 blacks came through Saint-Domingue.

Depending on the periods of the colonial era, sales were conducted either aboard slave vessels or at slave markets. To prevent speculating it was early made illegal to sell complete shipments, a practice which had shut out the



poor whites and, through speculation among retailers, raised the price of the bois d'ébène to an exaggerated figure. Following the health inspection, the disinfecting of slaves—in colonial terms “perfuming the vessel”—and the distribution of gifts in specie or in slaves to officials, doctors and surgeons, the slaves debarked, haphazardly dressed or naked, often unable to walk, dragging themselves toward the slave mart where colonial proprietors were already assembled for the bidding.

If the crossing had been a difficult one, some slavers subjected the slaves to a stay in “rehabilitation areas” (*savanes de rafraîchissement*) and after a cure of rest and overfeeding, which improved the captives’ condition, they were rubbed with palm oil to suggest the glow of health, a deception, followed with running and limbering-up exercises.<sup>90</sup>

Slaves were bought by the piece or by assorted lot after buyers had examined their musculature, verified their suppleness by having them run, checked their strength (even their virility), inspected their mouths and counted teeth, and finally evaluated their sturdiness and their courage.<sup>91</sup> Each colonist claimed his lot. There then unfolded the tragic spectacle of mother separated from son, husband from wife—never again to see each other. Rejects, the puny, fragile or sickly, were sold by the ton, turned over to religious missions as gifts, or quite simply thrown into the sea, for there was never any question of the slaver encumbering the return voyage with unsold surplus.

Herded by drivers armed with horsewhips and racked with the grief of separations, the newly purchased slaves moved along the roads to the plantations. During the first days after arrival on the plantation, slaves were again refreshed with hot infusions, baths and washing. They were purged, disinfected and sometimes given clothes and baptized. They were then assigned to secondary work gangs to be broken in and acclimated to the surroundings. Then, with the hot iron, they were branded on chest or breast with the initials of their master and from then on grouped with the four-legged plantation animals, the castrated bullocks and mules and, like them, carried henceforth on the inventory of the master’s estate.

In a subsequent analysis of Maroon descriptions we will underscore the diversity of ships’ brands, and especially those of the work gangs which were the usual identification marks of new slaves, even creoles. Just as branding was sometimes used to punish creole slaves turned Maroon, so, too, a certain Mr. Caradeux would not hesitate to use the brand as punishment to mark his runaway slaves in a special way.

Henceforth the slave’s existence would be fixed under the sign of the lash. For the slightest infraction he was “carved” for the sadistic pleasure of a driver. The term was colonial, an apt reminder that a portion of the skin was torn away by each whiplash and that, as these increased, they carved and deepened painful furrows in the lacerated flesh. A slave correctly thrashed could neither walk nor sit for several weeks. Man or woman, the

slave about to be whipped was stripped naked and the work gang was invited to witness the punishment thus adding humiliation to physical pain. Usually the whip consisted of knotted cords, cutting vines or a bull's penis (known as a *rigoise*).\* Few were the colonists who did not resort to the whip. It was general practice, legalized by the king. Even the clergy had no scruples about "slicing" their slaves. Father Labat, with his customary off-handedness and ingenuous verve, described the punishment he had had administered to a slave accused of sorcery, that is, of practicing his native religion.

I had the witch tied up and given about three hundred lashes which burned him from shoulders to knees. . . . He screamed like a madman. . . . After having him washed with a peppery solution I had him placed in irons.

Thus, in addition to a large number of restrictions protective of the slave, the Code Noir established punishments permitted the masters. It provided a range of penalties including that of death for a slave who struck his master or freedmen, or who committed "qualified thefts."\*\* Thefts of farm animals, vegetables, food supplies drew a lesser penalty, the slave being subject to a whipping and to being marked with a *fleur-de-lys*. A fugitive absent one month had his ears cut off and the *fleur-de-lys* stamped on his shoulder. If a repeater for another month he could have his hamstrings cut<sup>92</sup> and the mark of the *fleur-de-lys* on the other shoulder. For a third offense the penalty was death.

In particular, Article 42 of the Code gave masters a free hand by decreeing that "masters likewise may, when they believe their slaves merit it, have them chained and beaten with rods." The Code did not limit the number of lashes, thus opening the door to abuses of the whip which became current colonial practice. It is said that the Ordinance of 3 December 1784 enacted a century later to curtail the abuses considerably improved the slave's lot. Even so, the ordinance authorized fifty lashes of the whip.

ARTICLE II—The Edicts of March 1685 and 1724 will be carried out as prescribed: consequently His Majesty has promulgated and decrees most explicit restraints and prohibitions under penalties described hereinafter against all Proprietors, Agents, and Managing Assistants treating slaves inhumanely by giving them more than fifty lashes of the whip, striking them with sticks or causing them to suffer death from various causes.<sup>93</sup>

Like the preceding one, the new regulation established heavy fines, deportation to France, even the death penalty for masters who mutilate their slaves or "have them killed on their own authority." These threats intimi-

\* A formidable weapon when stretched and dried. In common use in some Caribbean islands as late as the end of the 19th century.

\*\* More serious thefts, for example stealing a boat: a means of escaping the island.



dated scarcely anyone, and at no time did masters believe themselves deprived of life and death power over their slaves. Actually, in addition to royal edicts and ordinances there was parallel and official legislation, that of the ministry, covering all infractions by colonists and practically guaranteeing them immunity. Local authorities were invited by the Minister himself never to uphold the slave on such rare occasions when the latter dared complain or found an ear receptive to his exposé of cruelties he had suffered. Besides, in these cases, in return for such a bold, difficult and, after all, useless initiative, he ran the risk of terrible reprisals. The fact is that throughout the colonial period there were letters from the office of the ministry in support of this state of affairs, all with the same objective:

If it is necessary to repress abuses of their authority committed by inhumane masters it is also extremely important to do nothing which might move the slaves to disregard authority and to stray beyond the limits of dependence and submission where they belong.

It is necessary to keep slaves in the state of dependence in which they belong and to do nothing that might give them cause to pull themselves out of it.

At the same time care must be taken to do nothing against the masters which might lessen slave respect for them.

If some masters misuse their power it is essential that by reprimanding them secretly the slaves be always led to believe that with respect to their persons masters can do no wrong.

It would be dangerous to provide blacks the spectacle of a master punished for violations against his slave.<sup>54</sup>

Covered by such a policy, Saint-Martin l'Arada could with impunity assassinate two hundred of his slaves, Caradeux, likewise, bury slaves alive, and Garesché keep a slave in chains for twenty-five years; this Malenfant saw with his own eyes as did all the people "over sixty years of age" who lived in the Boucassin quarter. Without fear of punishment, Martin and Lejeune assisted by a surgeon executioner burned the feet, legs and thighs of a large number of slaves with resinous pine torches, and the colonist lawyer for the Vaudreuil-Duras plantation habitually moved about his plantation with hammer and nails for hanging from a tree by the ear those of his slaves guilty of the slightest infraction. All of these masters were like competitors vying to snatch the palm from their sinister rivals in the macabre list of executioners: Chaperon, Latoisson-Laboule, Flonc, Boc, Jean-Baptiste Lapointe and the cruel overseer Fassi from Plantation Foucaud in Boucassin.

However unthinkable these cruelties they are authentic, having been revealed not by the slave but by their white masters themselves. Let us add that, in spite of the profusion of details accompanying these revelations, the veil has scarcely been lifted on these cruel practices, almost all records of this type having been, as was customary, burned every five years. Let us add too that even toward the end of the colonial period this barbarity was

still general practice in the cities and on the plains and hills, if we consider a statement that must be taken as truthful, that of Vincent and the honest Barbé de Marbois, administrators of Saint-Domingue. At the time of the trial and acquittal of Lejeune the Torturer they wrote: "There are entire sections where the old barbarity still persists in full force, the details of which make one shiver with horror."

In spite of the pathetic appeal to reason by responsible members of the colony, the torturers of course were neither "hanged in effigy," nor "secretly blamed and repressed." The savage whipping and torturing of slaves continued, as if it were not already enough to weigh them down to the death with hard labor without concern for their clothing and housing or even for providing them food.

Supported by absolutely authentic documents, Pierre de Vaissière, at his death curator of the Paris National Archives, called to mind in his passionate re-creation of Saint-Domingue, the cynical refinements in cruelty which were the slaves' lot. It is a long list of common punishments, which we have tried to complete with additions taken from several other historians, in an attempt to present an inventory of known tortures in a concise form, stripped of even more horrifying details.

Beating a slave with a whip, knotted tails, cutting vines or a bull's penis  
Torture on the rack  
Tying him or her to four stakes  
The hammock or hanging by the four limbs  
*Brimballe*, or hanging by the wrists  
Solitary confinement and deprivation of rest days  
The iron necklace and muzzle coated with pepper  
Hanging by a nailed ear  
Cutting off an ear  
Iron necklace with chains  
Hand and foot irons  
The *boise*, a piece of wood attached to neck or feet  
Iron mask, making it impossible to eat cane  
Torture of the bar enclosing both legs  
Iron collar with one or more prongs  
Chains of varying weight impeding or preventing walking  
Men or women chained together<sup>95</sup>

This list includes current punishments, the best known of which—the lash and the severed ear—were authorized by the Code Noir. But the colonists invented an infinite number of harsher punishments, sadistic beyond imagination. These extraordinary tortures, as is known, were not the general rule. We know too, that none of these is imaginary, that each relates to a specific, verified case of indisputable authenticity.



*Exceptional Tortures*

Punishment by the whip, the wounds aggravated by hot embers, pepper, salt, lemon juice, cinders, aloes or quick lime

Variations of torture by fire: slaves thrown alive into ovens or suspended over flames like so much meat on a spit, fire lighted under the belly

Burning of legs, thighs and feet by pine torches, the application of red hot iron slats to the soles of the feet, ankles and insteps

Burning of sexual organs with firebrands

Stripping and stuffing blacks anally with gunpowder which is then set off, known colloquially as "blasting a black's ass"

Spraying hot wax on arms, hands or loins, the same with boiling cane juice

Introducing animal fat into cuts made in the thighs

Breaking bones by blows of a stick, or iron bar

Mutilating a leg

Pulling out of teeth or making slaves eat their own ears

Condemning slaves to be ground in a mill

Attaching others to a tree and leaving them to die of hunger and pain<sup>96</sup>

Asking a slave to dig his own grave and burying him alive in it

Burying a slave to the neck, covering him with sugar so he will be eaten by flies or condemning him to slow death by placing him near an anthill

Tying blacks to stakes, placing them in mosquito traps

Placing blacks in cages and tying them to horses, their feet secured under the belly and hands tied to the tail

Making slaves eat their own excrement, drink their urine, and lick the phlegm of other slaves

Suspending slaves head down

Sewing their lips together with brass wire

Mutilation or removal of sexual organs

Organized drownings

Enclosing blacks in sacks, nailing them to boards, crushing them in mortars, enclosing them in barrels with inward-protruding nails or, finally, having them attacked by man-eating dogs

Exposing women to flames after having their breasts and vaginas burned and transfixed

Raping women before their husbands or making them witness their children being cut to pieces by machete

Further on, we will present an equally authentic listing. The documentation is overwhelming of the traces of these cruelties on the flesh of the slave. The evidence consists of public, official statements made by prison keepers about the condition of captured Maroons placed in jail. There can be not the slightest doubt about the use of torture and barbarity in punishment if

one reflects on the existence throughout the colony of official executioners, whether whites attached to the courts, or blacks condemned to death and earning this measure of clemency for carrying out their sad office. Not only were there executioners, but there were enough executions, tortures and crimes against the slave to suggest the need for regulating the function and setting the indiscreet price list revealed by Lucien Peytraud.

| SERVICE   | PRICE                  |
|---|------------------------|
| Hanging   | 30 livres              |
| Breaking live on the wheel                      | 60 livres              |
| Burning alive                                   | 60 livres              |
| Hanging and burning                             | 35 livres              |
| Wrist cutting                                   | 2 livres               |
| Dragging and hanging a corpse                   | 35 livres              |
| Putting the question ordinary and extraordinary | 15 livres              |
| Question ordinary only                          | 7 livres 10 sols       |
| Apology   | 10 livres              |
| Cutting hamstrings and branding                 | 15 livres              |
| Whipping  | 5 livres               |
| Pillorying                                      | 3 livres               |
| Effigying                                       | 10 livres              |
| Tongue cutting                                  | 6 livres               |
| Piercing the tongue                             | 5 livres               |
| Cutting off ears and branding                   | 5 livres <sup>97</sup> |

Saint-Domingue was a mill in which slaves as well as cane were ground; it was the principal burying ground of the slave trade. The colony "devoured" its slaves at a dizzying rate, for which neither the continued and increasingly massive arrivals of slave ships nor even less the birth rate could satisfy. The harsh conditions of slavery, the forced labor, the mistreatment, the tyranny and cruelty of the masters all served to increase mortalities. Hilliard d'Auberteuil's observation in 1776 after twelve years in Saint-Domingue is startling:

Ordinarily a third of the blacks from Guinea die in the first three years of transplantation, and the working life of an island-born black can be no more than fifteen years. . . . More than 800,000 blacks have been brought into the colony since 1680 . . . and yet now (in 1776) there are only 290,000.

To this Gaston Martin adds:

In the thirteen years from 1763 to 1776 the population has increased by only eighty-five thousand. Thus deaths have exceeded births by about fifty thousand. A frightening proportion.<sup>98</sup>



It is equally surprising to note the *A.A.* figures of two hundred and ninety thousand slaves in 1777 against two hundred and ninety thousand in 1776, despite the annual importation of Africans then exceeding fifteen thousand. Let us examine some other equally suggestive data, those, for example, for the year 1784 during the preliminary peace talks after the long American war:

Slaves introduced at Port-au-Prince and Cap, 9,488 and 13,342 respectively. Black deaths to the time of sales, 1,112 and 2,466. Net importation, 8,376 and 10,876, for a total of 19,252.

The eighty-two slave ships providing this supply were from Bordeaux, Le Havre, Nantes, La Rochelle, Marseille, Saint-Malo, Dunkerque and Honfleur.

The individual African was sold for 1907 colonial pounds at Port-au-Prince and at Cap for 1709. Just on the basis of the number of slaves imported and without counting the number dead from the date of importation to the time of sale each African brought a return of 1683 pounds at Port-au-Prince and 1393 at Cap.

The ratio of deaths to importations from the time of processing to the date of sales was about one to eight for Port-au-Prince and for Cap approximately one to five and one-half.<sup>99</sup> It would be interesting to discover the causes for this considerable difference but we dare not hazard a guess. Since slave ship declarations for all ports of the colony were made at Port-au-Prince and Cap an exhaustive search of the registry of these two cities revealed a total importation of 19,252 slaves at a revenue of 34,564,740 colonial pounds.

The same paper published a summary of baptisms, marriages and burials for the year 1783, which it is interesting to compare with the table of slave importations so as to get a more precise idea of the population flow.

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#### BAPTISMS

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|                        |      |
|------------------------|------|
| White boys and girls   | 586  |
| Colored boys and girls | 1596 |
| Slave boys and girls   | 4711 |

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#### MARRIAGES

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|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Whites                       | 207 |
| Colored people and misallied | 258 |
| Slaves                       | 18  |

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 BURIALS
 

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|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| White men and women   | 1399 |
| Colored men and women | 757  |
| Slaves, men and women | 2234 |

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We find preceding an examination of these statistics the following observation:

We pay very little attention to the Slave data; one of the lesser reasons is that we have the analyses of the records for only a few parishes. . . . There were six-tenths more Slave baptisms than burials because it is the custom to have them baptized and because in most Parishes the administering of the Sacrament is registered but most residents bury their slaves on the savannas. . . .

Slaves who hope to gain their freedom put off their children's baptism until that time so that they may be carried as free on the registers. . . . It is even possible that of the many managers administering the estates of absentee owners there might be a dishonest one who sells the owner's Slaves while recording them as dead and buried. Likewise there may have been others who falsified the records of births by deliberately not registering them. . . .

Father Laporte, chaplain at Fossette du Cap pointed out that of the 212 burials of freedmen carried on his roster, 137 had died before the ages of four or five, and that among the 206 deaths listed on the same 1784 register there had been 122 children, for a total of 259 children buried before the age of four or five out of 418 total burials for two years.

Among whites in the colony the male death rate is one in twenty-four, for women one in thirty. White males outnumber women three to one. Among freedmen male deaths are one in twenty-eight and for women one in thirty. Colored women outnumber the men by less than a fifth. There were also one-quarter more baptisms of boy slaves than girls and at least one-third more men than women buried. . . .

Here in addition are other equally valuable statistics and observations in support of the data leading to fairly acceptable conclusions about the evolution of Saint-Domingue's population. This new information relating to the year 1785 is also found in the Saint-Domingue press. The total number of Africans carried off in sixty-five slave ships and sold in Port-au-Prince, Cap, Léogâne, Cayes, Saint-Marc and Jacmel is 21,652 at an average price of 1996 pounds. Saint-Domingue alone received two-thirds of the slaves brought to the French islands. Here for that same year are the observations of the colonist Bonamy:



Of two thousand slaves working in the Maribarou sugar mill the totals on the sick roster are: January 602, February 604, March 522, April 558, May 740, June 505, July 654, August 615, September 620, October 526, November 490, December 590. Over a twelve-year period the work-force mortality rate has been  $4\frac{1}{2}$  percent or one in twenty-two. This figure I believe is taken for the colony as a whole. . . .<sup>100</sup>

In 1785, 21,652 slaves were imported, bringing 43,236,216 pounds. In 1786, importations increased to 27,648 at an average price of 68 pounds. In 1787, we have a comparative list of slave prices for the period 1750 to 1786 in which we observe the average price increasing from 1000 to 1968 pounds. In the same year a royal ordinance pertaining to the southern area of Saint-Domingue and registered in the superior court at Port-au-Prince is made public.<sup>101</sup> It reveals:

. . . that the southern region of Saint-Domingue has been practically abandoned and that far from representing new resources for the great increase in cultivation of which this area is capable the Blacks brought in there have scarcely been adequate replacements for those lost annually to the plantation by reason of sickness or desertion.

The number of slaves for 1785 and 1786 is 305,812 and 332,247 respectively. The general slave census for 1787 is 337,023, of which 27,330 are exempts.

Pierre de Vaissière states that, in 1787, forty thousand Africans were imported.<sup>102</sup> The English consul at Cap, Bryan Edwards, whose data is usually extremely precise, places 1787 slave importations at 30,839 and 29,506 in 1778. For 1791, the same author projects a total of 455,000 "seasoned slaves, adults and children."<sup>103</sup>

Some of these statements are contradictory, and clearly the statistics are incomplete. In addition, because of falsified declarations by colonists about the number of their slaves, and given the contraband importation of slaves and the manifest carelessness of masters in declaring work-gang births and deaths, these statistics cannot be taken as a correct estimate of the servile population. These reservations in mind, we shall make use of collected data to project a table which will make it possible to continue estimates from the date of Gaston Martin's last estimate, covering the thirteen years from 1763 to 1776, which included the statement "that deaths exceeded births by fifty thousand, a frightening ratio." Despite the missing figures an equally suggestive table is possible for the period 1777 to 1791.

Assuming a very reasonable average of 25,000 slaves imported annually during the last fifteen years examined, we arrive at a total of 375,000 imported. Added to a population which at the outset numbered 297,000 slaves, this brings the number of slaves to 672,000, if births and deaths for the same period were figured in the computation.

| YEAR | SLAVES<br>IMPORTED | TOTAL<br>SLAVE<br>POPULATION |
|------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1777 | —                  | 297,000                      |
| 1784 | 19,252             | —                            |
| 1785 | 21,652             | 305,812                      |
| 1786 | 27,648             | 332,247                      |
| 1787 | 30,839             | 337,023                      |
| 1788 | 29,506             | —                            |
| 1791 | —                  | 455,000                      |

To this population total we will add average slave births at the rate of 4711 annually, a total of 70,655 over fifteen years and thus hypothesize a population of 742,665. Of course, the figures for deaths must be subtracted from the total population count increased by births. Now, if we rely on official statistics there would have been only 2234 annually or 33,510 in fifteen years, bringing the total slave population to 709,155 in 1791, while Bryan Edwards' estimate for the same year is only 455,000 slaves. What then became of the 254,155 missing slaves? There would no longer be a matter of 2234 slave deaths annually but the, again, frightening figure of 16,943 slave-population deaths annually to be accounted for.<sup>104</sup>

The obtained result derives of course from summary calculations which we have sought not to complicate by growth rates and other common statistical techniques. Nevertheless, this uncertain figure, it must be agreed, would be overexaggerated when we rate the average price of a slave in constant rise, according to Bryan Edwards, to above 2500 pounds in 1791,<sup>105</sup> after having wavered between 1907 pounds in 1784 and 2099 pounds, 2 shillings in 1788. The figure is confirmed by Charles Mozard, director of *Affiches Américaines*, while, from 1730 to 1784, the current price of a slave did not rise above 1300 pounds.<sup>106</sup>

The sixteen to eighteen thousand slaves liquidated each year represent much more than half the number imported—in any case many more than could be compensated for by births. These are, besides, limited for a number of reasons in addition to prostitution, libertine behavior and "amenorrhea due to famine"—a result of malnutrition causing female sterility.<sup>107</sup> Pregnant slave women were subjected to plantation labor and deprived so to speak of maternity rest.<sup>108</sup>

Infant mortality was excessive. Children grew up without care; mothers, even wet nurses, often having been "in the garden." A child scarcely able to walk was put to work—if as an infant he had not fallen victim to the white children to whom he had been given as a toy, or if she were a young, scarcely nubile girl, whom the master had not already deflowered or made victim of the worst debauches, perverted and dragged into the depths of



prostitution. Many African women resorted to abortions to avoid becoming the mothers of slaves. One midwife servicing black women exclusively swore that over a period of years she had poisoned every child she brought into the world.<sup>109</sup> Another African woman, an Arada, claimed to have caused the death of more than seventy infants at Plantation Rossignol-Desdunes "in order to rescue them from slavery."<sup>110</sup> When it was not a matter of abortions, the death of newborns was effected immediately after birth by penetrating the fontanelle with a poisoned pin prick, leaving no trace and causing that mysterious sickness of the jaws that claimed so many victims. There were, indeed, an infinity of discreet, reliable methods for poisoning as well as for that mysterious art of swallowing the tongue, the kind of secrets that the Saint-Domingue slaves never revealed. Actually another deterrent to childbirth derived from the colonist, who preferred to buy another slave rather than be burdened with some difficult delivery, with the long breeding of a sickly child scarcely able to assimilate its food, or the absence of a pregnant slave barely able to sustain her pregnancy. True, other colonists maintained breeding factories, giving bonuses, unofficial freedom, or days off to mothers of three, four, and five children.

It is surprising that the administration did not in any sustained, effective way encourage a similar program in support of an increased birthrate and that it did not appear to view with alarm the disturbing disproportion between masters and slaves which Saint-Méry computed as "three-tenths of a white for every eleven slaves."<sup>111</sup>

Actually, with the exception of some meager advantages granted mothers of six slave children, the administration attacked the problem full force, indirectly, by attempting to increase the birth rate among white colonists or freedmen. From a list of people awarded pensions given to fathers of ten and twelve children, we find that in 1788<sup>112</sup> the administration awarded fifteen hundred pounds annually to white men who fathered twelve children, and seven hundred fifty to those with ten children. Colored men received an annual two thousand pounds for twelve and five hundred pounds for ten children. There were not many claimants—in all, forty whites and thirty-four freedmen, including several widows representing prolific husbands unperurbed at having so large a family as ten or twelve children.

The loss of some sixteen to eighteen thousand slaves annually seems unbelievable. In any case they disappeared from the census. The hypothesis which comes to mind is that the drop was a result not only of deaths but also of slave desertions. It is reasonable to assume that colonists did not care to have these fugitive and irretrievable slaves carried on their inventories, thus leaving themselves subject to paying head tax on practically non-existent slaves.

The cry of alarm embodied in the Royal Ordinance of 1787, on behalf of the South, bears repeating. It describes, and expressly so, the actual situation throughout the colony in which "the blacks carried there . . . have

scarcely sufficed to replace the numbers lost annually to the plantation through illness or desertion." There is no other explanation for the incessant to-and-fro traffic of slave ships between all the ports of the colony, ships crammed with Africans from Gold Coast, from Senegal and especially in those days from the Congo and Angola kingdoms mingled with groups of Mozambiques.

At times they numbered as many as forty thousand in a single year. And Saint-Domingue kept on crushing their bones to the very marrow in the pitiless mills of slavery. After ten or fifteen years of punishing labor many slaves, weary and worn, lapsed into the lethargy of premature old age.<sup>113</sup> They were then assigned to the less tiring job of herdsman or caretaker. Those unable to perform these tasks, which did not call for the great physical expenditure required by field work and sugar mill, were often resold. Owners had not the slightest scruples in discarding these old, sometimes faithful, servants now become useless mouths to feed, castoffs good only for the garbage can or for palming off, well concealed, in a lot carefully and craftily put together for the occasion, offered to some naive buyer.

How many worn-out old men in the twilight of a miserable life given in the service of a pitiless master were thus offered for sale! How many suspected dramas lie in those pitiless newspaper advertisements! Note for example the advertising of "a blind negro suitable for working at the wheel,"<sup>114</sup> 2 male and 2 female slaves, 10 years in the country, cash or payable in March."<sup>115</sup>

With the analysis of Maroon descriptions in succeeding pages we will discern, every veil being lifted, the unendurable, unsuspected horror of slavery. It is graven in the lacerated flesh of the Saint-Domingue blacks, and no one can doubt that this inhumane regimen was of itself a cause of maronage. That privileged and satiated administrator, Governor Fénelon, who by the way enjoyed "the scandalous salary of 100,000 French pounds silver,"<sup>116</sup> recommended from Martinique that "the blacks be led like beasts." His sinister counsel was well exceeded. The colonists were solicitous of their horses. They fattened their mules. But for the slaves they countenanced death brought on by hunger, by hard labor, torture and the whip. The depraved colonist was every bit the savage beast. With feelings of both anger and bitterness, Pauléus Sannon, our best historian, has declared that there was in Saint-Domingue "a collection of beasts of burden exploited by beasts of prey."<sup>117</sup>



1. César de Rochefort, *Histoire naturelle des Isles de l'Amérique*, Rotterdam, Retner Leers, 1681, pp. 340ff.
2. Pierre-François Xavier de Charlevoix, *Histoire de l'Isle Espagnole ou de Saint-Domingue*, Paris, chez Jacques Guérin, 1731, pp. 497ff.
3. P. Labat, *Voyage aux Isles Françaises de l'Amérique d'après l'édition de 1722*, Lefebvre, Paris, 1831, p. 169.
4. P. Nicolson, *Essai sur l'Histoire naturelle de Saint-Domingue*, Paris, Gobereau, 1776, p. 57.
5. Moreau de Saint-Méry I, pp. 46-50, 79. Taillemite-Maurel edition.
6. Dubuc de Marentilles, *De l'esclavage des nègres dans les colonies de l'Amérique*, 1790, cited by Vaissière in *Saint-Domingue*, pp. 154-155.
7. Here, there is scarcely any mention of slave absences due to laziness, libertine behavior or other unimportant reasons. These are not marronage, but simply "hooky, flights for which the slave had in advance expected to get himself pardoned without too much trouble or punishment." Except when, by becoming prolonged for weeks, they changed character, these flights were seldom included in descriptions of Maroons. Everything indicates that they were typical of slave behavior.
8. P. Nicolson, pp. 18-20.
9. The African *daba*, aside from the length of the handle, is not very different from the colonial hoe.
10. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, *Le Processus d'une Culture in Tax: Acculturation in the Americas*, Vol. 11, Proceedings of the 29th International Congress of Americanists, University of Chicago Press, 1952, p. 145.
11. Suzanne Sylvain, *Le Créole haitien*, Meester Printers, Belgium, 1936, p. 178.
12. Jules Faine, *Le Créole dans l'Univers*, Imp. de l'Etat, 1939, pp. 14, 20, 214.
13. With the exception, of course, of rare cargoes of slaves destined for Saint-Domingue in 1790 and 1791 and loaded at Maurice Island. Jules Faine certainly did not have this information. It is scarcely pertinent, since it is subsequent to the formation of Creole. It is not known if Africans were imported from Maurice before 1790, but it is hardly likely.
14. André Marcel, a renowned linguist, has just had published by the University of Leyden, Holland, a scholarly study of the real origins of Haitian Creole. In picking up Jules Faine's thesis with a more scientific approach, this book will reopen the debate and accentuate our inquiries.
15. Descourtilz, 111, 192. Today they say more frequently *bounda*; the word *bonda* (behind) is African. It is found again, curiously enough, in Argentina. See Peredo Valdez's *El Negro Rio-platense*.
16. Sonthonax's Proclamation in Creole.
17. Descourtilz, 111, 214.
18. Descourtilz, 111, 217.
19. Malenfant, 204, 206.
20. It is largely an African syntax, notably Ewe, that must have marked Creole. Furthermore, Creole vocabulary is derived from the French of the era, especially nautical jargon, old French expressions and colonial parlance. These at least are the most common conclusions.
21. Sailor's idiom that became a synonym for speed.
22. An expression absorbed into the current French of Senegal.
23. S.A.A., 24 April 1784. In the *Affiches* of 15 March 1787, a worthy Cap businessman observed that "the rules of our language are greatly neglected in Saint-Domingue. . . . If they applied themselves more to the study of the French lan-

- guage, we would doubtlessly less often hear said *light the light*, a *dompte* instead of a *dompté* (tame) mule, *charoyer* instead of *charier* (to cart) a house *en maçonne* for *en maçonnerie*, a certain dead man leaving five to six children, a lady arrested by five to six guards. . . . You can't leave five and a half children, nor can you be arrested by five and a quarter guards . . . a rapid reflection, etc."
24. "Slavery is an institution deeply rooted [in Africa]. The slave is treated as any other salaried person, often even better cared for and nourished, for the master receives the best advantage in conserving his goods intact: he is in some way a part of the master's family. . . ."—Jules Leclercq.
  25. Let us remember that slavery existed and still exists in Africa. According to the Anti-Slavery Society of London, this institution still exists in Libya, Mali, Cameroon, Mauretania, Nigeria, Tchad, and Senegal, not to mention the Maghreb. In the world today there would still be in about forty countries ten million slaves to liberate, principally women used as prostitutes or children used as money. For example, at the time of pilgrimages to Mecca, "masters have been observed making provisions to pay for their return trip by selling on the spot young boys who have become veritable travelers checks."—Marie-José Vlobert, in *L'esclavage n'est pas mort*.
  26. Yaya Wane, *Les Toucouleurs du Fouta-Toro (Sénégal), Stratification et structure familiale*. Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique I.F.A.N., Dakar, 1969 pp. 67ff.
  27. "There was a time in the Kingdom [of France] that you would scarcely have found a million true citizens as against twenty million true slaves."—Statement by Abbot Brudeau in March 1766, reported by Michèle Duchet, "L'idéologie coloniale" in *Anthropologie et histoire du siècle des lumières*, Maspéro, Paris, 1971, p. 164.
  28. Ed. Démolins, cited by Auguste Magloire, in *Histoire d'Haïti. L'Ere nouvelle*, Ire partie, 1909, pp. 231-233.
  29. Saint-Méry I, p. 58. The same Saint-Domingue historian tells of Africans astonished to see their own images in a mirror, to hear the "tick-tock" of a watch or shocked to see a master drinking red wine, confusing it with blood. These are the pictures which upon Columbus' arrival usually described the primitiveness of the Indian, who was, certainly, of a culture less developed than that of the Africans.
  30. "Suicides multiplied more especially, as the slaves' general belief was that, once dead and buried, they would return to their homeland."—Father Labat, I, 450.
  31. On Sundays, a ceremony of like inspiration in memory of the brothers deported by treaty takes place, facing the sea, on the beaches of Lagos, Nigeria.
  32. During the crop time, some sugar factories actually operated at night, not only for the boiling of the sugar, but also for grinding the cane. It was especially at night that accidents occurred in the mills. Therefore it was the practice to make the slaves sing in order to keep awake.—Vaissière, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
  33. Factory slaves comprised indigo workers, millers, sugar makers, carters, sorters, coffee dryers, pressers, and packers on the cotton plantations, and so forth.
  34. Citations by Pierre de Vaissière in *Saint-Domingue*, Paris, 1909, pp. 166-168.
  35. See *Affiches Américaines*, 1786.
  36. Malenfant, *Des colonies et particulièrement de celle de Saint-Domingue*, Paris, 1814, p. 204.
  37. *Idem.*, p. 185.
  38. Père Labat.
  39. Malenfant, *op. cit.*, p. 278. It was the custom to share a carreau of land among ten to sixteen slaves, depending on the masters, the region or available land.
  40. The Ordinance of d'Ennery and de Vaivres. *A.A.*, 1789, pp. 388-389.



41. *Nouvelles diverses*, no. XLI, 20 May 1789. It is an ordinance about freedom of commerce in the South—in slaves, flour, animals, salt preserves, and other items and annulled by the king in July of the same year.
42. According to *A.A.*, "Along with manioc the millets are the most commonly grown items in Saint-Domingue."
43. See Jean Fouchard, *Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue*. Port-au-Prince, 1954. If rice was not a frequent item in the slave diet, it was eaten rather frequently aboard slave vessels or by certain work gangs (Vaissière, 160 and 172). According to Stanislas Foäche, rice was "the healthiest food," but it should be noted that the slaves of certain nations were not fond of it.
44. *S.A.A.*, 7 July 1784.
45. Writing from France, a proprietor to his overseer: ". . . Your accounts alone condemn you. The two thousand francs you spent on provisions could not have fed 150 slaves. And you think you have done a great job when you dole out to an unfortunate who has worked all day three ounces of bread and a morsel of salt cod. . . ." Yet this is the same owner who earlier wrote to the same overseer, "You should try as much as you can to accustom your slaves to their ordinary fare and to provide their own food so as to cut down expenses. . . ." G. Debien, *Plantation et esclaves à Saint-Domingue*, pp. 71-72. In the interval there had been deaths and desertions, and the master in anguish saw his wealth in slaves diminish.
46. To guard against excessive importation of flour, Abbot Delahaye published in 1781 a 106-page brochure, through Dufour de Rians, entitled *L'art de convertir les vivres en pain sans mélange de farine*. In it, the Dondon priest recommended making bread with manioc, sweet potatoes, tanya, yam, plantain, rice, corn, millet and pumpkin. *A.A.* 23 October 1782.
47. *Voyage d'un Suisse en différentes colonies*, Neufchâtel 1785, p. 138.
48. P. Nicolson, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.
49. Cited by Father Antoine Gisler, in *L'esclavage aux Antilles françaises*, Fribourg, 1965, pp. 39-41.
50. As told by Malenfant, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
51. Du Tertre, 11, 520.
52. Father Labat, p. 178 adds, "The slaves are seldom shod, that is, wearing shoes and stockings. . . . Ordinarily they all move about barefooted and the soles of their feet are as hard as shoes."
53. *S.A.A.*, 16 April 1785.
54. It is the women who, as we still say today, "give the mill its food," feeding the cane between the rollers.
55. Contrary to the custom in many African countries, the men also went to market. Among certain African peoples men do the heavy labor of clearing the land and women plow, seed, and harvest.
56. They even denounced the extravagance of cheap hats, "festooned with bits of tin."
57. *Traité sur le gouvernement des esclaves*, Emilien Petit, p. 83.
58. Vanufel, *Code des Colons de Saint-Domingue*, p. 72.
59. We owe this detail to Laurette Mozard, the printer's daughter, born in Port-au-Prince. Despite having left the colony at an early age she wrote her *Mémoires d'une créole du Port-au-Prince, Ile de Saint-Domingue*, Paris, 1844, p. 24.
60. Saint-Méry, I, 75-77.
61. Malenfant, *op. cit.*, pp. 135, 140.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
63. *Souvenirs du Comte de Vaublanc*, I, 171-201.
64. *Mémoire sur l'établissement de la partie française de Saint-Domingue*, p. 25.
65. *Mémoire* (anonymous) *sur les désastres de Saint-Domingue*, cited by Vaissière.

66. Girod Chantrans, *op. cit.*
67. *Journal général de Saint-Domingue*, 3 and 6 November 1790. Dissertation on the fraud in cloth materials.
68. *A.A.*, January 1769 and 7 August 1770. *S.A.A.*, 28 February 1775. *A.A.*, June 1775.
69. *S.A.A.*, February 1782—"For sale, a plantation with ten negroes and ten slave houses roofed in straw."
70. See Lebreton Savigny "Observations faites par les voyageurs français, sur l'esclavage . . ." in *L'Afrique Littéraire et Artistique*, August 1971. The same author elsewhere enumerates other accounts of the general conditions of slave life identical, climate excepting, to those in Saint-Domingue: "The houses are uninhabitable in the summer and glacial in winter. Furnishings are, so to speak, nonexistent. The black wraps himself in a shabby cover and stretches out on a board. Dureau saw slaves assigned to perform hard work who received only a piece of rancid pork no larger than an egg and wormy cornbread a beggar would not have accepted . . . blacks in rags . . . groups of negroes in tatters, children already advanced in years with but a shirt in shreds. . . ." And to think that the fathers of American Democracy—Washington and Jefferson—were both slaveholders. . . .
71. Dutertre.
72. Saint-Méry mentions this in the same terms as Father Dutertre.
73. Saint-Méry, III, 1298.
74. Malenfant, p. 165.
75. Labat.
76. Ducoeurjolly, I, 50.
77. Descourtilz, III, 205.
78. Descourtilz, p. 233. Pap made from manioc is called *couche-couche* in the South.
79. "A water mill can be set up to deliver water to the slave houses," informs an advertisement for the sale of a plantation adjacent to Mont-Organisé. *S.A.A.*, 8 May 1773. In addition there is mention "of a cistern near the slave quarters capable of filling three hundred water barrels." Upon his departure from the colony (*S.A.A.*, 18 August 1780) Mendès-France's elder son offered for lease his plantation located five leagues from Petit-Goâve "with good water and sufficient food supply for 150 negroes." Chevalier de Puilboreau, offering his plantation for sale (*S.A.A.*, *Feuille du Cap Français*, 20 December 1788) indicated that it had "a fountain which by means of canals supplied water to the slave houses" and that on his plantation in Gonaïves, also for sale, "the slave houses are on a lovely mountain torrent." It seems clear that the colonist was at times concerned about the supply of running water to the slave houses. Also apparently, this was for the most part the concern of masters living in Saint-Domingue and personally managing their plantations.
80. Saint-Méry, *op. cit.*, I, 63. For the black women especially the Calvaires, whose charming smiles were highly praised, white teeth were considered an ornamentation.
81. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, January 1791.
82. *Supplément Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, January 1791.
83. Information provided at the Brussels Antislavery Lectures.
84. Pierre de Vaissière, p. 158.
85. Peytraud, p. 411.
86. One Delisle Thibaut, a slaver proposed—vainly it seems—a better ventilation of the slave cargoes heaped between decks. It was a successfully tested method, he said, of saving slaves. "On opening the hatches we almost always find several



dead slaves who the previous evening had shown no sign of indisposition and many others surely dying." *Gazette de S.D.*, 3, 12, 1791.

87. Vaissière, p. 161.
88. Saint-Méry, 153, p. 467.
89. Peytraud, p. 109.
90. Gaston Martin. Now and then the *Affiches* mentions a slave "with a possibly somewhat swollen face, still weak from seasickness." Some slavers like Foäche announced at their sales that they had already "rid themselves of defective slaves."
91. At the overwhelmingly successful Brussels Antislavery Lectures, Mr. Jules Leclercq, president of the Royal Belgian Geographic Society, painted a striking picture of the slave marts, now almost completely disappeared, as they were conducted in Africa. The picture provides an idea of the traditional African slave markets before and after the slave trade:  
 "The sale (of Sudanese slaves) takes place in broad daylight at the slave market. The prospective buyers gather under the vaulted galleries taking a turn around the area; in the center there is a ceilinged hall where one can take in the auction. The public crier arrives holding by the hand a young black woman, a nursing on her back. Loudly he announces that the minimum price of the mother and infant boy is two hundred francs. He then moves her from room to room, where each one exposes her, feels her wrist, examines eyes and teeth and after a most minute inspection adds one, two or three piastres . . . the auction becomes lively. . . . He runs rather than walks, dragging the unfortunate woman after him, extracting higher bids on the run; the price mounts and after a half-hour comes to a stop at double the prescribed minimum. . . ."
92. In practice, above and below the knee.
93. *S.A.A.*, 16 April 1785: The same supposedly humane and comprehensive ordinance gave permission to make pregnant slave women and nursemaids work, even if with a more or less abbreviated schedule, in the sugar factories at milling time and in other factories and, in exceptional cases, to make slaves work until eight o'clock at night. Incidentally, the same ordinance continued to lump "slaves and animals."
94. These suggestive extracts were cited by Father Gisler in his interesting study *L'esclavage aux Antilles françaises*, pp. 107-111.
95. Apparently a common practice. Many examples of its use are seen in the newspapers of the colony, especially during the years preceding the American War.
96. According to Father Labat, this punishment was known as "drying out the slave."
97. Peytraud, *op. cit.*, 307.
98. Gaston Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-125.
99. An extremely rare case. Stanislas Foäche announced in the 18 June 1766 *Affiches* that his ship "did not lose a single slave during the crossing."
100. *S.A.A.*, 14 January 1786.
101. *A.A.*, 10 March 1787.
102. *Op. cit.*, p. 164. Let it be noted in passing that the *Affiches* gives the figures for colored people as 12,883 and 16,992 for 1785 and 1786.
103. Bryan Edwards, *Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of Saint-Domingo*, London, 1787, p. 200.
104. It should be noted, incidentally, that the burial of Africans who had had good friends was accompanied by cries and lamentations, eulogies by the griots, singing and drums. Several days later a "service" consisting of a great feast bringing together friends and family was organized. Mourning was in white, the head kerchief folded in two (Saint-Méry, I, 80).

105. *Op. cit.*, p. 200. Le Pays de Bourjolly refused to sell one of his skilled slaves for fifteen thousand pounds (Saint-Méry, III, 1319).
106. *Almanach général de Saint-Domingue* B.N.P. et Statistiques published in the *Affiches* of 10 March 1787.
107. Leroy-Laberie in *Annales, economies, sociétés, civilisations*, December 1969.
108. See in Malenfant, *op. cit.*, 206, the formal accusation of the slaves on Plantation Fleuriau, on the Cul-de-Sac plain.
109. Vassière, *op. cit.*, p. 244.
110. Descourtilz, II, 185. In May 1760 the administration had tried vainly to reserve to whites alone the monopoly of the practice in midwifery.
111. Saint-Méry, I, 28. On the subject of Saint-Domingue births, it might be helpful to invoke in comparison the response of Dr. William Wright to an inquiry of the Privy Council of Great Britain on the causes harmful to the slave population of Jamaica: "Using women at too young an age, inconstancy and loose living among both sexes, the latter's hiding of syphilitic infections, their nocturnal jaunts and excessive dancing, an excess of alcoholic beverages." *A.A.*, 29 November 1788.
112. *Affiches Américaines*.
113. "At forty physically old and about half of them dead." G. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
114. *S.A.A.*, 10 January 1784. Example repeated elsewhere.
115. *S.A.A.*, 11 March 1786.
116. P. Rennard, *Histoire religieuse des Antilles Françaises*.
117. Pauléus Sannon, *Histoire de Toussaint-Louverture*, I, p. xv.



### III

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## THE MAROONS OF LIBERTY

delivered babies; relieved sore throats and *la bisquette*,\* reduced coughing and chest inflammation; cured the venereal infections so prevalent in the work gangs; treated high fevers, sores, epilepsy, hernias and itching caused by chiggers.

It was the slaves themselves who, living among such great numbers of illiterate or semiliterate masters, felt the need to learn to read and write, who, in the face of legal prohibitions, secretly made off with spelling books and primers.<sup>3</sup> Even the Creole language itself, if it had not been invented by the Saint-Domingue Africans, if they had not passed it on to us with the milk of their mothers' breasts, had it been a totally borrowed phenomenon or purely a French creation, we would nevertheless have to admire the slave's ability so quickly to enliven the language with a treasury of songs, tales, proverbs, and legends invested with so much grace, richness and beauty. This is not even to mention the patoislike language of the drums and *lambis*\*\* and all those melodies of the four-stringed African violins, which, with their festive or languorous rhythms, have become first our *chicas*, then our *cara-biniers* and *méringues*.<sup>4</sup>

Add to these contributions our way of thinking and our progress amid those furrows which, in the harmony of our *vévés*† and the impeccable order of the ancestral rites and dances, were etched, as it were, in our flesh and one with our blood, enriching our patrimony and each quiver of the national soul. It was the slave who inspired and created the colony's tanned leather shoes, the cuffs and headpieces with fancy lace, who imposed on French factories the checkered cloths and lively colors which dominated colonial style. It is the female slave who taught the major element in feminine dress: the madras headdress, African style, and creole rings, just as it was the emancipated woman who served as a model for white women and whom, we note with some surprise, many young creoles tried to imitate "in their attitudes, their bearing and gestures." Or else they tried to extract from them "secret practices in the art of lovemaking."<sup>5</sup>

It is the African on his own who, thrusting barriers aside, made his place in the theater, mounting the stage, establishing the talent of Minette,†† and setting the vogue in local comedy.<sup>6</sup> It is the slave who contributed creole cooking, that special art of preparing crab, turtle, fried or frittered *pisquets*,‡ wood pigeons fed on bay-tree grain, Guinea-sorrel jelly, highly spiced yams,

\* A heart affliction.

\*\* A conch and a very popular food item in certain Caribbean islands. The shell was also used for sounding signals.

† Cabalistic signs usually traced on the ground in flour before a Voodoo ceremony.

†† A popular black entertainer. In February 1781 *La Comédie de Port au Prince* ignored the color line to present the fourteen-year-old Minette playing Isabelle in the one-act opera *Isabelle and Gertrude*. The "young person" as she was called for a number of years, enjoyed a widely acclaimed career.

‡ A tiny river fish easily caught by the hundreds.



cabbages or palm grubs *en brochette*, calalou gumbo, and the delicate use of ginger and nutmeg, or the proper use of hot sauce, not to mention the use of accasan, red beans, plantains, tamarind juice, soursop, pineapple, apricot and cashew apple.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of the negative attitude of the colonist steeped in indifference and scorn, in spite of prohibitions or the policy of keeping slaves at the level of beasts, blacks were clever enough to carve out, however slowly, an improvement in almost every aspect of their situation—a limited, far from generalized improvement, no doubt, but one nevertheless so significant as to impose on colonial life elements of their own culture. It is an obvious phenomenon—and a most extraordinary one, given the barriers and prohibitions and the conditions of slavery in Saint-Domingue.

However modest, this breakthrough affecting at once health practices, artisanry, clothing, cooking, sick care, teaching, housing, furnishings, even day-to-day colonial life and fashion, must be seen as a prodigious effort. By his own genius, the African invented, taught, and practiced many of the methods in use on plantations and in sugar mills. These were, for example, the use of banana leaves to reduce heat and condensation in conduits,<sup>8</sup> a special method for preparing soil, for fertilizing, for shaping barrels; a greatly varied use of straw or vegetable fibers, including rattan matting, that was still an important export as late as 1842.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the slave was responsible for the popularizing of certain foods and techniques in the cultivation of those food crops and the consequent increase in the wealth of Saint-Domingue, with, in 1789, 7,756,225 banana trees, 1,278,229 manioc plants, 12,734 carreaux of corn, 18,738 in potatoes, 11,825 in yams and 7,046 in millet. Clearly it is not these incomplete details that are important. What is important, rather, is that these scattered examples, admittedly far from spectacular or convincing, when isolated, be inserted in the overall statistical accounting that is so pregnant with surprising initiatives. Everything that gave to the colony's manufactures and plantations their own orientation and character, distinguishing them from European agricultural and cattle-raising methods, was the contribution of the slaves. This cannot be overemphasized.

Neither the Indian nor the indentured white could match the black contribution to the incredible wealth of Saint-Domingue. Yet the tendency is to think this was merely a triumph of physical courage, "of useful animals" devoid of the slightest intelligence.

As clearly demonstrated, the African was by no means a simple work animal; he was instead the courageous, intelligent instrument that was, after all, the real source of production in Saint-Domingue. He was very far removed indeed from the shapeless, bestialized creature "devoid of all feeling," whose image the colonists and other witnesses of the colonial period have singularly distorted without according the slave, if not the highest awards due him, even the least recognition of the quality and value of his forced contribution to the prosperity of the distant capital.

Will it ever be sufficiently remembered that, thanks to the Africans of Saint-Domingue, one out of every five Frenchmen lived high, grown fat with gold louis on the sweat of the faceless slave who deserved a prayer each evening in every hearth in the Kingdom of France and Navarre?<sup>10</sup>

From the perspective of Western civilization, what was the condition of the Africans brought to Saint-Domingue during the slave trade? They were considered primitives. It is quickly said. All philosophy about human goodness aside, the label might still appear just if we compare the level of development to which they had been reduced in the slave-trade era with the precise, often distinctive, cultural scales of the European, for example, who, in a general way according to Western concepts, better—perhaps solely—represented that idea which the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were developing with respect to progress, growth, and that whole complex of acquisition and conquest defining Civilization, all concepts still operative.

Nevertheless, we will not plunge into that extravagant demonstration of African racism by which we would triumphantly point out that the chew-stick, or other plant stem for oral hygiene was quite as good as the tooth-brush; that certain vines were used as soap; that rope bridges or bone needles were signs of progress; and that for centuries the practice of applying cobwebs to wounds or of delivering pregnant women stretched head down stopped bleeding or eased certain difficult cases of childbirth. Many of these empirical methods were clearly effective—so indisputably so that modern science became interested in them as well as in the African use of the secrets of herbs, finding therein ideas and new formulae for adoption.

This reasoning is, however, too simplistic or much too limited for comparison with a civilization that had already discovered the printing press and the steam engine. Within the world of the masters, even Saint-Domingue had its ear to the ground to sense the march of Progress. At Cap they were experimenting with airships. On 10 April 1784, at the Marquis de Galliffet's plantation, two leagues from Cap, before the General, the Intendant and a large crowd, Mr. Beccard launched a thirty-foot balloon, made of 204 pounds of taffeta, that rose eighteen hundred feet, then came down some four hundred yards from its takeoff point. This experiment in imitation of "Montgolfier's rising sphere" was successfully repeated three times consecutively.<sup>11</sup>

The Philadelphians kept themselves informed on botany and medicine. The press featured probing essays that were precursors to the discovery of radio, the submarine or stenography (tachygraphy),<sup>12</sup> even to Abbé Bertholon's invention

of a machine called Parachute, actually a sheep placed in a wicker basket sustained by twelve cords which descended slowly from a height of one hundred feet, six times in succession, without harm to the docile animal.<sup>13</sup>



This was, then, a world apart, unknown to Africa, a world of scientific achievements of which the African of the slave-trade era probably had not the slightest inkling. We should also hasten to add that certainly, without the leadership given them, without the irrigation works, the dams and technical tools of the colonist, the transplanted Africans would not have been able so quickly and efficiently to bring about the extraordinary agricultural and industrial development of the colony.<sup>14</sup>

Be that as it may, if the African of that day, cut off in general from the outside world and undermined by internal wars, was outside the stream of this dominant civilization he was by no means a shapeless and dull primitive or a retardate enmeshed in sorcery, cannibalism, and the most frightful savagery, a being barely emerged from the level of the beast. The Africans—the Sudanese and especially the Guineans and the Bantus, who formed the first beginnings of the Haitian people—came for the most part from geographic areas where civilizations had been born, flourished, and subsequently ruined by tribal divisions, wars, and raids of conquest.

These civilizations could not have failed to leave in the very blood of these races some traces of instincts, passions, virtues and marks of a culture whose roots, buried in the heart of so many generations could not have disappeared, not even in their relatively progressive melding with Islam or through the influence of the Moors or of "those Arabs whose knowledge still astonishes the Europe they helped to enlighten."<sup>15</sup>

Certainly it is known that the Sudanese empires, to which Mandingans and Bambaras were heirs, made it a practice to relegate to the coasts those peoples resistant to assimilation and strong enough to maintain their individuality, and that "it is especially they who comprised the slaves of Saint-Domingue."<sup>16</sup> Thus it was these proud rebel blacks, and it was the bravest, the strongest and the healthiest of these, whom slave traders reserved for Saint-Domingue.<sup>17</sup> Again, at the time of the slave trade, people in every region of the Gold Coast boasted elegant, comfortable homes and an elaborate cuisine. Malenfant has left us the exact words of the slave Tamerlan, from Boucassin who, like many Islamized slaves, knew how to read and write. Formerly instructor to the king's son, he said that the country in which he had been captured had a capital constructed in wood and well laid out, with a population of three hundred thousand living in one-story houses.<sup>18</sup>

Descourtiz, for one, testified to the practice of Burnou blacks in Artibonite who for writing used "dried pods of the 'mimosa olens'\* boiled in lemon juice . . . bamboo quills . . . palm 'stains' and small boards."<sup>19</sup>

It was on the West African coast that the very ancient art of metal working flourished "in the golden civilizations." From foundries and kilns typical of such early origins<sup>20</sup> came engraved sabers for warriors and princes, caned pommels for chiefs, jeweled and plain rings, iron and copper hand bells,

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\* A leguminous plant.

bracelets worked with sea shells, and fragments of ivory, wood, and skillfully sculptured horn. In brief, all the traditional luxury of black Africa with its high taste for ornamentation.<sup>21</sup>

Simple animals? Come now!

We doubt that Descourtilz exaggerated in vaunting the Aradas as follows:

These people were produced by the finest of bloods; it is as though in their noble and pleasing form Nature most carefully perfected its method of generation.<sup>22</sup>

Nor can we believe that the cruel, scornful Rochambeau gave way to an excess of enthusiasm when, in that well-known letter to the minister of the Marine, he so forgot himself as to salute "this superior race of Africans waging war against us,"<sup>23</sup> or that Hilliard d'Auberteuil was mistaken when, much like Malenfant or Moreau de Saint-Méry, he stated that "slaves easily learn all sorts of trades."<sup>24</sup>

Even Father Dutertre could not refrain from noting:

If their bodies have suffered the severe trial of slavery, their souls nevertheless have remained unconquered. . . . They value themselves as much as and more than the masters they serve. . . .

And Lemonnier Delafosse:

The black surrendered himself completely to the flames thus to show his enemies he knew how to die. These are the kind of men we have to fight. . . . What men these blacks! How they fight and die! You have to have fought them to appreciate their boldness, their inflexible courage in the face of danger. . . .

Schoelcher was able to conclude without exaggeration that:

French generals . . . three years in contact with them are agreed in saying that they found in these new men not only military ability and valor but also talents of the first order. . . .

In contrast, it is astonishing that Antenor Firmin, so unexpectedly aligning himself against several contemporary witnesses of colonial life who sometimes conceded intelligence and skills to Saint-Domingue blacks, could have so lightly and unremittingly denied them any capacity for growth:

Blacks carried to Saint-Domingue had no inclinations immediately to advance toward higher social forms. Not only was the psychological disposition lacking, but often in the depths of their being there were ancestral inclinations pulling them toward an unfortunate retrogression. . . .<sup>25</sup>



Thus the erudite author of *The Equality of Human Races* stands in contradiction to historical truth. However shattered, however tortured and degraded he may have been, technically and culturally the slave was well above the Indian who, in this land, had preceded him in chains. It is with the advantage of being a productive force that he replaced both the Indian, already weak and debilitated from easy living and sickness before the genocide effected by the Spaniards, and those white slaves, the "thirty-six-month indentured servants." These whites—Bretons, Normands and Poitevin workers—though not overwhelmed like blacks by the crushing weight of servitude—demonstrated that they lacked the physical strength and courage of the Aradas, Hausas, Ibos or Senegalese. The contribution of the African to the prosperity of Saint-Domingue was a major one. This was by no means a race of degenerates or "serviceable animals" who made it possible for the colony "to engage on its own two-thirds of the trade interests" of the French kingdom.<sup>26</sup> Considering the frightful conditions of slavery their progress, however modest, is far from being commonplace or mere chance achievement.

And, if the Africans of Saint-Domingue were lacking in aspirations for well-being and liberty, if they did not have an astonishing capacity for growth, how then could the epic of the Haitian Revolution be explained? That the slave, hobbled by chains, prisoner of a brutalizing and diabolical regime, could have aspired to such heights and by his courage and his own efforts achieved them remains a surprising and admirable feat. This success could not have been determined merely by the sociological principle which states that "What is a source of moral regression for one may become, in the secret exchange that occurs, a stimulus to growth for the other. . . ."<sup>27</sup>

The slave who, despite the colonist, eked out a relative well-being and, by his own courage, achieved liberation from his chains, how could he have been that subhuman specimen, formless and stripped of all intelligence and aspiration, the slave "devoid of all feeling," that painful image so many whites have wished to perpetuate? How was this supposed degenerate capable of taking over the country, expelling the masters, and fashioning a disciplined people,<sup>28</sup> revealing himself to be an able administrator, builder, and inspired strategist, improvising, in the isolation of his language and of his new status in the midst of a hostile, slave-holding America, the organization and administration of the first republic of free blacks in contemporary times?

As Father Cabon wrote in a gripping page, how could one not immediately recognize the worth and the eloquent significance of slaves from a vast continent with different customs, civilizations, often different languages, achieving "the community of ideas and customs which later became established among them."<sup>29</sup>

As for the causes of marronage, strange as it may be, there is still resistance to the idea of the slave's thirst for freedom, a completely natural desire it would seem, when evoked by the animal instinct of the hunted beast. Would they have the slave even lower on a hypothetical scale of evolution than the

very beast which manages to kick over the traces? Admittedly, all the so-called classic reasons may have brought on occasional flights and recourse to marronage. However, we cannot believe that the desire for liberty was not also a cause of marronage. Father Dutertre was the first to point out the reasons for slave runaways and he abruptly excluded this factor. "To explain these flights we must look," he wrote "for reasons other than the desire for liberty."<sup>30</sup>

Father Dutertre limited the causes of runaway marronage to harsh working conditions, to uprooting and homesickness, bad treatment by masters and insufficient food. It is this same statement that colonials and historians of the time repeat, denying the slave any aspiration for freedom.

We are by no means astonished. It is, however, surprising that, in our time and despite the broadening of minds, there are those who adopt the same point of view without attempting to analyze the facts except in conformity with the prejudices of the colonial period. Of all the present-day historians of marronage, Yvan Debbasch appears to be the most entangled in this anachronism, although he may have presented a somewhat advanced study of certain aspects of marronage. This self-esteeming, inadequate essayist, who vehemently attacked the Haitian school,<sup>31</sup> picks up Father Dutertre's statement and in support offers imaginary statistics.

Debbasch in fact wrote: "Statistically speaking it does not seem to us that the will to freedom counted for much as a cause of marronage."<sup>32</sup>

What are these statistics? Occasionally Debbasch cites one or two editions of the *Avis Divers du Cap*. He went no further in his inquiry. Doubtless in order to marshal statistics he must have consulted and interpreted with equal superficiality the few rare interrogations of captured Maroons who explained their flight, one of whom gave as his reasons fear of punishment for having lost a tool or for having allowed a horse to run away, while another stated that he was poorly fed and racked by homesickness and worn out by excessive labor. Debbasch classifies the latter's confusion as a pathologic case. According to him this Maroon "is sick," and "he is a Maroon precisely because he is sick."<sup>33</sup>

Cut-rate psychoanalysis. . . .

Referring again to the interrogations of blacks, those that have been handed down to us are very rare. No more than thirty, perhaps. Of course, Debbasch, who invokes them as if they suffice to corroborate any opinion whatever on the causes of marronage, omits citing interrogations in the course of which men and women on trial did not shrink from revealing they were opposed to slavery and were seeking freedom. There comes to mind the black midwives who swore that over a long span of years they had caused the death of all the infants they had helped to bring into the world "in order to rescue them from slavery." It is opposition to slavery and the pursuit of freedom that is at play in the case of Médor, the black responsible for large-scale poisonings, or of the Maroons who dared "to preach independence," of



Jérôme, called Poteau, of Télémaque and the other accomplices in repeated nocturnal meetings of more than two hundred slaves in the Marmelade sector in 1786.<sup>34</sup>

To what motive, then, if not the desire for freedom, was the mass of fugitives responding, those who camped in the woods and inaccessible gorges vainly hunted by the police? And why the long list of Maroon chiefs during three centuries of resistance to slavery, and how would the memory of their rebellion have been perpetuated had they not been able to gather around them bands of Maroons and fugitives animated at the peril of their lives by the same ideal of forever freeing themselves from bondage?

As stated, the superficial analyses and the gratuitous statements of this author at first sight betray a great agility to say the least. Here in any case is the weak, equivocal position of those who deny the slave the desire for liberty, refusing even to admit this feeling as one cause of marronage. In contrast there is the Haitian school and historians who, like Peytraud, Pierre de Vaissière, or Gaston Martin have held to the contrary point of view, recognizing the need for freedom as the determining cause of marronage.

Finally there is the position of a group of historians like the late lamented Father Cabon or Gabriel Debien—a hesitant, subtle position that avoids any categorical, definite assertion before marronage has been systematically studied. There exists in the "Haitian school" a deep-rooted "even aggressive" tendency, according to Debbasch's somewhat scornful expression, to credit the slave with an ideal of freedom as the major cause of his flights and therefore of marronage.

Certain historians have characterized this tradition of our historians and analysts as romanticism, oratory, oversensitized judgments of writers and, of course, excessive racial solidarity. The reproach is justified to the extent that the Haitian school has dedicated to marronage rather more enflamed texts and patriotic couplets than systematic, serious, and in-depth studies of the causes and growth of slave flights. It is nonetheless true that, in crediting the slave with the ideal of liberty and by acknowledging this noble aspiration of the slave, the Haitian school has aligned itself with the logic of history and events when it attributes as the cause of marronage the clearly evident and natural love of liberty which is, after all, the very sense of the history and liberation of the Saint-Domingue Africans and the pertinent explication of all Haitian history.

Those who contest this position have never tried to prove or succeeded in proving the contrary. If with respect to marronage Beaubrun Ardouin, who more than any other person inspired the Haitian school, did not examine the unknown statistics mentioned by Debbasch or analyze the testimony and correspondence of administrators and colonists or the descriptions of Maroons, he nevertheless based his position on history itself. Have they not read in the history of Hispaniola and Saint-Domingue that under Ovando, Africans introduced to the island only eleven years after the discovery fled

in groups "and perverted the Indians by exciting them to rebel"? And have they not observed the organization of and the sharp increase in slave flights and in the incessant practice of marronage, the coming together in bands all throughout the colonial period?

Was there no echo, no voice of History telling of slave uprisings in the French, English, Dutch, and Danish West Indies, in Guiana, and in the two Americas?<sup>35</sup> And how could it be that only in Saint-Domingue were these forms of rebellion not inspired by resistance to slavery and the desire for freedom on the part of blacks sharing the same origins?

We know there were even some white Maroons in Saint-Domingue. How else could they be designated, those engagés who, in order to escape the obligations of their terms of indenture and working conditions that were too harsh, fled their masters for secret hiding places or emigrated to neighboring countries? To stop escapes of the indentured, severe punishment was levied at the start of the colonial period against these "species of white slaves";<sup>36</sup> they were threatened with the fleur-de-lys branding of the shoulder, with having an ear severed, or having hamstrings cut.<sup>37</sup>

These exemplary punishments reveal that many "thirty-six-months" indentured servants were runaways. How can it be reasoned that men subject to a maximum three-year indenture would feel the need to escape before term the strictures of a contract freely entered into and at the same time attempt to deny other men bound by force and for life to more barbarous conditions the need for seeking, through marronage, to put an end to insupportable misery? In light of these historic facts can we really reproach Beaubrun Ardouin and those Haitian historians who adopted his line for having reached one of the conclusions which for them were inspired both by logic and by the history of Saint-Domingue? Hear Ardouin:

Let us note that to the honor of human nature and that African race for all of three hundred years reduced to servile condition, debased and oppressed let us note that the love of freedom never ceased to manifest itself among the blacks brought from Africa and enslaved in Saint-Domingue. They can claim with pride that there were always people among them who with heart and soul challenged the European tyranny. . . . Love of liberty often incited them to flee the tyranny oppressing them. . . . The blacks proved . . . that love of liberty was as strong within them as within other people.<sup>38</sup>

We must draw attention to the fact that the Haitian school was not alone in attributing to the slave about to enter Maroon life a compelling urge for freedom. With respect to the cause of marronage, contemporary historians such as Lucien Peytraud, Pierre de Vaissière or Gaston Martin, who for so many years studied Saint-Domingue history, took a position quite similar to that of the Haitian group, this without having tested by thorough study of slave runaways the bases for their nevertheless positive conclusions. We shall



return to this, admitting for the moment that these historians may have, like Ardouin and the entire Haitian school, reached their conclusions more through finesse and sentimentality than actual evidence.

But it is difficult to believe that the minister for the colonies could be accused of superficiality and at the same time be regarded as an accurate observer of daily colonial life. This minister, who kept close watch on the course of operations, was of all observers of the era the most informed and the most dedicated to subjection of the slave and disciplining of blacks. Nevertheless it is that principal witness, the minister, who in 1776 would write as follows: "There is no doubt they would have much greater success in making slaves lose, if possible, their desire for freedom by easing their lot and treating them well."<sup>39</sup>

To lose, if possible, the desire for freedom! There it is. Is this acknowledgment needed for believing that the Haitian school invented nothing? No more so than the words of Lucien Peytraud who concludes that:

In the Antilles, marronage was a ceaselessly festering wound. There were very few plantations which did not experience acts of marronage. It can be said that from the time that slaves first appeared in these islands there were maroons; and no means of preventing this offence. On the contrary it kept on increasing, so native to the human heart is the love of freedom.<sup>40</sup>

Or of Gaston Martin who, going a step further, states,

. . . that they [the Maroons] will be the first architects of the first emancipation of Saint-Domingue; they were already at that time for almost a hundred years the greatest source of anxiety and the most constant threat to the population.<sup>41</sup>

Or yet again Pierre de Vaissière who writes: "To them marronage seemed the most striking protest against their depressing condition. As time went on the number of maroons only increased instead of diminishing."<sup>42</sup>

The position of Cabon or Debien is that of the honest historian for whom only proof is important. No one has studied more exhaustively the colonial past. Father Cabon, who calmly analyzed the history of slavery in Saint-Domingue, ended his most exhaustive study with this cry, so rare in his unemotionally written account of the colonial era: "It is impossible that the slaves whatever they were did not feel their debasement."<sup>43</sup> If he did in fact suspect the real cause of marronage, his thinking was reticent and very subtle. He was scarcely affirmative about the importance of marronage to Saint-Domingue or about the gravity of desertions in the socio-economic and political life of the colony.

The opinion of my friend and confrère Gabriel Debien is somewhat aligned with that of Father Cabon. It is, however, hedged with disturbing questions, which make it apparent that this major historian of Saint-

Domingue has not yet formed a definite opinion about the Maroon ideal of liberty nor of the eventual linkage between marronage and the organized rebellion that led to the general slave uprising. Here and there, however, amid the reservations and hesitations Debien, in the honest passion of a researcher and with a burning thirst for proof, questions himself. Debien has studied the phenomenon of marronage more deeply than Father Cabon and at much closer range. He has seen and analyzed numerous plantation and sugar mill records and especially a number of Maroon descriptions. It is not surprising to hear him question whether marronage, excluding factors of a general or occasional nature, grew out of resistance to forced labor or was related to "the desire for liberty at all costs." Nor again is one surprised to note, in his solid study, *Marronage aux Antilles au XVIII Siècle*, his rather suggestive observations: "For us, at least, the reason behind some flights defy explanation. That these flights often indicated dissatisfaction, might have represented a protest there is no doubt. . . . But did it run deeper? Was it a struggle against slavery?"<sup>44</sup>

In the slave world there were, no doubt, those who by temperament were resigned, submissive and incapable of revolt. Some who since Africa had become accustomed to being a master's "thing," moral and physical weaklings, apathetic and contaminated at length by the practice of slavery; the infirm, the hopelessly sick, the privileged house slaves content with their lot, concubines handsomely rewarded by their masters, certain skilled workers in the field gangs or, finally, indoctrinated and catechised slaves who feared eternal damnation.

The timid, the weak, the credulous and the satisfied—these all existed, along with captives incapable of entertaining the slightest impulse to flight, prisoners of an unrelenting, vicious discipline. Some among them had no other recourse than to "maroon" to death, the ultimate possibility for liberation from chains. It is known that Ibos and Minas were wont to commit group suicides. There are terrifying examples of these dramas of slave despair in the form of poisoning, strangulation by swallowing the tongue, hanging, drowning, self-mutilation, and abortions practiced especially by Arada women.

If there were those who were resigned—and within what limits of real submission?—there were also rebels. It is not difficult to believe or to prove. Slaves ran away in spite of the kindness of masters. This must be underscored to show clearly that marronage responded to an inner voice which historians and analysts have unanimously failed to describe, refusing because of prejudice or habit to attribute to the slave a desire for freedom.

It is a fact that sometimes the purpose of slave flights was to escape abuse by overseers, managers, and drivers. However, not enough attention has been given the fact that many blacks fled from plantations or factories where they profited from the benevolence of their masters. This fact is important however to the determination of the causes of marronage. Of course,



where we speak of the kindness of masters, it is to an often very relative benevolence that we refer. Let this be clear.

The most eloquent example of this is provided us by Plantation Bréda, where Saint-Domingue born Bayon de Libertad was overseer on the holdings of Count Louis-Panaleón de Noé. Nephew—and, through his mother, Elizabeth de Bréda, heir—to the Count de Bréda, he was generously solicitous of the slave and in general accorded them humane and charitable treatment. Toussaint-Louverture, a Bréda slave, bore witness to this and publicly explained his appreciation and his attachment to Bayon de Libertad and his family.

There is, in some suggestive correspondence in the National Archives of Paris additional confirmation of this overseer's reputation for kindness, correspondence that relates to the short history of Bréda through successive overseers. One of these, a Mr. Gilly, was never able to maintain discipline and became the sport of the slaves. He was replaced by a fair and firm Bayon de Libertad, who was succeeded by a Mr. Delribal. This irascible and suspicious man drove the slaves to ill health with his persecutions. Poisoning was suspected. The storm was gathering. A group of twenty-five slaves escaped from Bréda. Everyone clamored for the return of Bayon de Libertad, who restored order and brought back the fugitives. From that point on (it was then the end of 1773), Bayon de Libertad stayed on until the approach of the Revolution, to provide for Bréda a reputedly paternal regime which, in comparison with the cruelty of other masters, was certainly more humane, if indeed it is possible to speak of kindness in slavery.

Here at Bréda will be found proof that, even when under a humane master and thus spared the usual hardships and torture, some slaves never gave up the idea of liberty. In fact, the mild regime in effect at Bréda did not prevent a slave companion of Toussaint, a Bambara named Vincent, branded "Bréda" on both sides of his chest, from going maroon. Unfortunately he was arrested at Dondon and jailed in Cap on 23 May 1783.<sup>45</sup>

This was not an isolated case at Bréda. Among the same slaves of de Libertad, that is, even among Toussaint Louverture's companions of the time, we note shortly afterward two other blacks gone maroon from the Bréda plantation and joined by a young creole:

Lafortune, a Mondongo black with no brand and a Congo black, Jacob, also not branded, both Bréda plantation slaves, arrested in Haut-du-Cap and jailed on 30 December 1783.<sup>46</sup>

The following month a young slave "born on Bréda" escaped. Arrested in Cap he was jailed on 20 February 1784. This was a stocky, fifteen-year-old creole, Jean-Louis, branded "Bréda" on the right chest, "who said he was from Plantation Bréda."

We cannot speak of the plantation without evoking the still-unsolved

mystery of the most illustrious of its captives. Like this courageous youth above, Toussaint was born at Bréda among the cane furrows and the unheard sounds of sprouting roots. Thanks to his position as privileged servant, coachman, and especially as veterinary and herb doctor<sup>47</sup> he enjoyed at Bréda a *liberté de savane*.<sup>\*</sup> To this favored status, which was his from the age of thirty, well before the period of Bayon de Libertad, was added the advantage of being able to amass savings, which undoubtedly Toussaint exaggerated in putting at 648,000 francs. This would amount to 121,000 dollars,<sup>48</sup> an inconceivable fortune for a slave, even for a poor white or the average free black and mulatto.

Whatever the case, Toussaint, amid all the unrest at Bréda in 1773, then in 1783, did not budge. At that time he was approaching his forties, if in fact he was born in 1746. Although puny in appearance, Toussaint had hardened himself through physical labor and his passion for horses. In addition, he possessed a spirited temperament. We see him at eighteen striking a Bréda clerk, Béagé, who without authorization had used a young horse from the stable under his charge. By laying hands on a white, Toussaint had risked the most pitiless punishment prescribed by the Black Code of the colonial regime—hanging. By some miracle the matter was resolved. Béagé acknowledged his error.

Slaves ran away during the days of overseer Delribal. Under the administration of Bayon de Libertad, marronage continued. The hotblooded Toussaint still did not budge. It was not money that deterred him. He had never needed money. As is known, he lived on cassava and cold water, distributing his garden produce to his less fortunate companions. In order better to secure the loyalty of this fine servant, his masters vainly offered him Bréda's "young frisky women," all crazy about dancing and self-adornment. Toussaint, respectful of Christian morality, had chosen for his companion Suzanne Simon Baptiste<sup>49</sup> already the mother of a son named Placide,<sup>50</sup> whom Toussaint would adopt as his own son, and would come to love more than Isaac and Saint-Jean, born of his marriage. Around him, sharing his tranquil and cloudless good fortune Toussaint had old Pélagie, his adoptive mother; his blind old father, who would survive him, not dying until 1804 at the age of 105; his godfather, neighbor-teacher Pierre Baptiste, who taught him to read and write; his wife Suzanne and her brothers and sisters; one of the latter, Geneviève, was found again living in Caye at the time of the war in the South.<sup>51</sup>

Toussaint had amassed enough money to buy the freedom of the entire family, his own included. Yet he did not budge from Bréda. He awaited his hour. The years passed. We are still at a loss when we consider the mystery of the hidden life which prefaced so great a destiny. Son-in-law of a Dahomey chief, Gao-Guinou, Toussaint voluntarily remained in slavery. He was fifty

\* An unofficial, limited form of "freedom" allowed some slaves. The savane was the overall area of the plantation, apart from the big house.



years old. Masters were little inclined to haggle too much over the freedom of slaves at that age already prematurely old due to the harsh conditions of slavery.

On the eve of the Revolution beginning in July 1789, administration of the three sugar mills left in legacy by Count de Bréda in Haut-du-Cap, Plaine du Nord, and Bois de Lance passed to Silvain Séguy de Villevaleix,<sup>52</sup> named as attorney. Bayon de Libertad remained at Bréda and would still be there in 1791, in what capacity we do not know. In those years when the storm was rumbling in the North, there was a new game of musical chairs with overseers at Bréda.

The important Villevaleix correspondence made available to us by Gabriel Debien<sup>53</sup> contains very disturbing revelations about the development of Bréda Plantation. The benevolence of the masters—again we make the point—was relative. Even the plantation at Haut-du-Cap was not beyond reproach. One might have been led to be suspicious of Bayon de Libertad if credence had been given to the envious quarreling among overseers. We draw upon Debien's valuable documentation as historic truth, without the slightest desire to tarnish in any way Bayon's reputation for kindness endorsed by Toussaint himself at a time in his miraculous rise when he scarcely had need of Bayon. There were, however, such matters as the liquidation of several old slaves, the sale of the mulatto woman Laurence to his father, an alarming incidence of sickness and death, inadequate food for the slaves, the damage done by fugitive blacks. There was Francisque, a black, dead as a result of cruel treatment by the overseer, M. Valsemey, replaced by Mr. Labertonnière, and especially there was a renewed outbreak of marronage at Bréda. Nine Maroons were said to be implicated; then twenty-seven others were arrested. Bréda plantation was far from being a model of sweet tranquility. In November 1790 there was in the Cap jail a woman Maroon, "Julienne, picked up on Carenage Hill,<sup>54</sup> a Nago with the Bréda brand on her breasts and bearing the marks of her country over her entire body, age about twenty, claiming to be from Plantation Bréda."

Toussaint still had not chosen freedom. He was, however, not insensible to the plight of his brothers. Later, in a letter to the Directoire Executif, dated 8 Fructidor An V (26 August 1797), he would relate:

Born into an unfortunate class, already at the age of fifty when the French Revolution which changed my destiny as it changed the destiny of the world had its beginning, I had acquired not without danger to myself some degree of learning which [these] barbarous laws never permitted us to acquire. Born to slavery, but having received from Nature the soul of a free man I frequently directed my sighs to the heavens, every day I lifted my hands to it to pray the Supreme Being to come to the aid of my brothers and to deign to shed his grace on us.<sup>55</sup>

Thus we come to 1791 in the midst of the public unrest agitating Saint-

Domingue. One day Toussaint stumbles onto a heated conversation between a royalist and Bayon de Libertad. There is talk of paralyzing the Colonial Assembly by an uprising of the work gangs. In a flash the shrewd, intelligent Toussaint sizes up the situation, sees how his brothers can profit from it. He hazards "a few words in approval of the project," thus entering into the plot, demanding as his price the liberation of the slaves who would raise the plantations to revolt, for himself a safe-conduct pass guaranteeing him against any subsequent prosecution,<sup>56</sup> and, above all, for the mass of slaves three days of liberty and suppression of the lash.<sup>57</sup>

Toussaint maneuvers behind the scenes. He conducts parleys with Jean-François, Boukman, Biassou, and Jeannot, the Maroon leaders of the general revolt. On August 14, near Plantation Lenormant de Mézy in Morne-Rouge, amid cries of "Liberty or Death", the oath of Bois Caïman cements the solidarity of the slaves.

On August 16 Plantation Chabaud is in flames. At that point the government suspects the existence of a vast conspiracy and searches for the leaders on plantations Desgrieux, Flaville and Blin. On the night of the twenty-first, Boukman incites plantations Noé, Clément, Flaville, Gallifet, and Turpin to revolt and at their head overruns Limbé, then Acul, burning plantations and houses and massacring whites. In four days flames cover all the northern plain, the insurgents are at the gates of Cap, and a mass of flames has laid waste Petite Anse, Quartier-Morin, Limonade, Grande-Rivière, Saint-Suzanne, Dondon, Marmelade, Plaisance, and Port-Margot. For a period after the bloody August nights of 1791, Toussaint is still at Bréda. He maintains order and watches over the safety of the plantation and the life of Mme. Libertad, his master having gone off to assist in the defense of Cap.

In November 1791 Toussaint, who had previously purchased the freedom of Pélagie, his adoptive mother, sends his wife, Suzanne, to the Spanish sector, well out of harm's way. He has Mme. Libertad escorted to Cap. Later he will ask for Libertad, "old Bayon now at age sixty," permission to remain in the colony, with a subsistence provided by his former slaves in appreciation "of the fact that in earlier times he treated them humanely."

It is not until November 1791, after having paid these debts of appreciation, that Toussaint is ready to rally the insurgents. He enters the ranks as an obscure doctor to the rebels. He will not actually begin his extraordinary adventure until two years later, 29 August 1793, with his historic call:

I am Toussaint-Louverture. . . . I have put my hand to vengeance. I want Freedom to reign in Saint-Domingue.

This very lengthy examination of the special case of Toussaint as slave will not have failed to demonstrate that Bayon de Libertad was a decent master and that in spite of his kindness Plantation Bréda was by no means spared from marronage. To the contrary! The same may be said for Gallifet



Plantation, the largest in Plaine du Cap, where the slaves were so well treated that there was a colonial expression "Happy as a Gallifet black." And yet we see these same Gallifet slaves, at the time of the general uprising, carrying as a standard a white child impaled, flinging themselves upon Odeluc, the good agent of the plantation, and strangling him.<sup>58</sup> "Mr. Clément's assassin was a postillion to whom he had always been kind."<sup>59</sup>

Should there be need for additional easily identified proof of marronage from the premises of kind masters, there is the long list of slaves branded *Charitas* who escaped from the Pères de l'Hôpital at Cap, although the fathers were so generous and sympathetic and had so much compassion for the illnesses of the slaves; there are runaways from priests and missionaries, most of whom had demonstrated sympathy for the slave cause. Throughout the colony it is openly said that many priests gained "sweet entrance to paradise" beside a black concubine,<sup>60</sup> raising their little bastards with loving care. At least these clergymen did not embrace the "shameful" example of

. . . those whites who convert their homes into mulatto factories . . . they openly engage in the most despicable business imaginable; for 3000 pounds on the average they sell mulatto boys still feeding at the breast.<sup>61</sup>

The Saint-Domingue newspapers frequently publish sale notices, rather typical in style, placed by colonials leaving the island and desirous of unloading their bastards:

For sale a fine slave girl of twenty-one, with her little mulatto boy, aged three. Contact Mr. Duputel, Cat Street near the Prison.<sup>62</sup>

In 1781 Mr. Fontaine, Director of La Comédie, sold "a black woman age twenty to twenty-two with a little mulatto she gave birth to fifteen days ago; she has plenty of milk."

Regarding this matter of slaves going maroon in spite of the kindness of their masters, we would not know how to challenge those advertisements of captured fugitives jailed in Saint-Louis or Fort Dauphin for having tried to escape the doubtlessly less rigorous slave conditions under their own fathers or mothers or brothers:

Jean Baptiste, creole griffe illegible brand on left chest, height five feet six inches, says he belongs to his father a free griffe living in Cavillon.

Ariette, creole woman branded Dougé on the right breast (in reversed letters) says she belongs to her mother Thérèse, free Negress living in Léogâne.<sup>63</sup>

Creole Jean-Baptiste, claiming to be free jailed in Fort-Dauphin the tenth of this month, branded F.I.P. three times on both sides of the chest,

height about five feet eight inches, said he previously belonged to his brother, one Jupiter a free black.

Descourtiz has emotionally described the dramatic suicide of an Amina black and her two children:

Scarcely debarked and without having experienced any ill treatment at the hands of the Messrs. Desdunes who treat their slaves as loving fathers their children . . . she was seen wandering off from her work towards the banks of the Ester, each moment pausing to measure by sight the depth of those limpid waters, and sighing as she raised her eyes to heaven and striking her breast. This unhappy mother particularly aroused the interest of the senior Desdunes who saw to it that she was treated with great consideration. . . . However he could not make her forget a fate the harshness of which was really only imaginary. One morning this woman was found drowned with her two children whom she had tied to her waistband so that like her they would be saved from slavery.<sup>65</sup>

Here and there the correspondence of benevolent masters reveals that at the outbreak of the general uprising no slave hesitated to revolt, and most often they were incited to rebellion by house servants, by their own drivers, and if there were any, by privileged slaves. James cites this typical example:


A Port-Margot planter had taught his overseer to read and write, had made him free and had willed him ten thousand francs; he had given the latter's mother some land for raising coffee. Yet this black had led into revolt the slaves on his master's and on his mother's plantations, burned them and joined the rebels who gave him an important command.<sup>66</sup>

In much the same fashion we will see the slaves of Jean Baptiste Gérard in the South desert the plantations of this just and understanding master, and those of Louis-René Le Pays de Bourjolly, member of the Conseil d'Agriculture, and strongly attached to his work force, also join the revolt, after having assured their master's flight to Jamaica. There, as a result of his relationship with an Ibo slave woman a son, Eugène,<sup>67</sup> would be born and brought up with care at Bourbon College. He would become an upright, well-known, magistrate and the long-time-presiding jurist of our Court of Appeals (Tribunal de Cassation) before completing his upright and courageous life bathed in the veneration and respect due one of his high culture and exemplary integrity.<sup>68</sup> We will find that a Grande-Rivière planter, a Mr. Cardineau was killed by his two sons whom he had fathered by a black woman and whom he had set free from infancy and brought up "with the greatest affection."<sup>69</sup>

There is no doubt that the kindness of a master could never erase the slave's natural aspiration for freedom and never weaken the permanence of so natural and legitimate a reaction. On this subject, Debien's statement is



very interesting. Despite his reluctance to include the sense of liberty as a cause of marronage, the statement does, in effect, support the liberty thesis.



There are flights without any explainable cause, at least to us. It is not always the master's harshness which prompts the slave to marronage. Sometimes kind masters lose more slaves to marronage than very harsh ones. Apparently slaves run away without knowing why, without motive or plan, without foreseeing anything. Every day we see some of them who just the day before had killed and salted a pig for several months food supply, without the slightest cause for discontent run off with their wives, children and friends.<sup>70</sup>

Debien thus confirms the observation of a Saint-Domingue witness, Girod Chantrans, who had noted that "nothing is more common in the better work gangs than runaway conspiracies."<sup>71</sup> These observations clearly indicate that from the moment the slave was subjected to too severe a discipline or to insuperable barriers to a less regulated coming and going, often his first concern was to seize the unexpected occasion or circumstance to run away. He frequently preferred his liberty in spite of the benevolence of the master, without concern about the more difficult life of adventure, if not hardships, he was embarking on once become a Maroon. . . . Thus he opted for the adventure with its risks and sufferings, but illumined by liberty. The kindness of masters, then, could not prevent marronage. On the contrary, without their meaning to do so, it made it easier. In a sense it was true that good masters "spoiled" blacks.

As for the other classic causes of marronage, they do not suffice to explain an impressive number of flights "without cause." The descriptions of Maroons more than prove this.

Uprooting? Why then was grand marronage, forgive the term, committed en masse by creole slaves born on the island? And why, even in Africa were there instances of marronage? Cruelty of the masters? Why then did slaves run away from benevolent masters? Harsh labor? Why did house-servants, specialized workers, hairdressers, coachmen, valets, nursing mothers with their children, and the master's concubines run off? Insufficient food? Why did the well-fed desert: cooks, pastry makers, bakers, waiters in inns and fancy lodging houses, and even drivers, privileged slaves who often fleeced the other slaves, multiplying their personal gardens and pillaging others with impunity?

Finally, how explain the often very dangerous slave flights by fragile boats, sometimes braving the open seas; castaways picked up, captives carried back to neighboring islands or survivors of these suicide operations carried by a favoring wind to an unknown coast, out of reach of their former masters, all seeking a chance to escape from slavery?

Could it be that slaves through whim and, without motivation daily exposed themselves to risk and dangers? These pertinent questions clearly in-

dicating another reason for marronage, one that can only have been the urge for freedom: the inability of even the well-fed, well-treated creole or *bossale* slave, sheltered from the cruelty and abuses of severe masters, to accept servitude.

This was also true of slaves born in the country and familiarized with its way of life not having ever known any other environment than this colony where they were born and which they had never left.

These fugitives, who must be called the Freedom Maroons, existed in every period of colonial life. They are not those occasional runaways impelled to flight by factors of a general nature, such as epidemics, famines, floods, or the great droughts which periodically desolated the parishes, ruining the food crops. Daily across the years and in every region of the colony, the descriptions of creole and bossale fugitives, both the timid and the aggressive, indicate they were armed with machetes. These comprise the young and strong, the old, the sick and disabled field hands, domestics, women, and drivers.

As for the new blacks from all the "nations" in the slave-trade area, how many had no sooner debarked, had not yet been confronted with the rigors of slavery, had often not yet been branded, yet took to flight, incapable of making themselves understood or unable to speak a known language, ignorant of the Christian names given them, or those of their masters, far less knowing whether the latter was kind or harsh—who fed his slaves well or who brutalized them with work?

Let us move one step further. How could these new blacks end up, as if by chance, at secure hiding places in the mountains even "with the Spanish" immediately after arriving in an unknown country, the language and geography of which they did not know? By setting out directly toward the deep gorges or to the east, to find unerringly "Spanish land," where by intuition they knew they would perhaps find work and wages, or even if in bondage find humane treatment? Did they find their way by pursuing some glowing image, however vague, of freedom regained? By organizing their stages on an unknown route, finding shelter, sometimes so cleverly from the comings and goings of patrols or of the constabulary? By an apparently chance finding of a hidden refuge for sleeping, eating, and drinking, and by guessing, also miraculously, the route to the next halt at dawn's earliest light?

What then were the Maroons pursuing on the open sea, in the forests, on inaccessible mountain peaks, or beyond the frontiers, the mass of creole or new blacks picked up by the hundreds and brought back from "Spanish land"?

Here we touch upon the heart of the problem posed by these slave flights and the multiple plots linked to them. The answer to these questions is simple and without rebuttal except by those who would still deny these runaway



new blacks any ideal whatever of liberty or who would contest the evident solidarity demonstrated in the pursuit of that liberty.

What other alternative could there possibly be to this stubborn persistence in denying the evidence? To believe perhaps that each of these fugitives either scarcely debarked or even still back in Africa knew by some gift of divination that "Spanishland" was a refuge? That thus informed, they headed for this land of shelter in providentially organized stages with maps and itinerary, provided simultaneously with interpreters and guides supplied from heaven and, in addition, found upon arrival a welcoming committee also descended from heaven?

Do they prefer a history seasoned, like some fairy tale, with grotesque science-fiction episodes, to the dazzling irrefutable truth of the existence of these Maroons athirst for liberty and of the clandestine networks in the slave world organizing and facilitating escapes?

And those imposing, seasoned, and active Maroon bands which were ready to staff and enlarge the general slave uprising in 1791, did they descend from the heavens? Had there not been the common practice of maronage in the name of Liberty, and the hope of permanently protecting this freedom from the daily perils of secrecy; by what contributions could the armed rebellion have so suddenly grown? How could there have been so suddenly consolidated a force for the rapid and devastating explosion it unleashed in the northern parishes while waiting to spread the flames to the four corners of the colony? Certainly, it could not have been improvised.

Marronage among the new blacks is a subject loaded with burning questions and with a long trail of light attached to the feet of the fugitive. Marronage, we know, was a very common recourse and very current in the latter days of the colony as it had been earlier. Wish it or not, this approach leads us far away from the idea of a simple malady of the colonial system. We are confronted not with fugitives interested in timid, short-lived escapes, but with true rebels—aggressive, determined, and hostile to slavery. What is more, how could we not, in all logic, end up with the indispensable complicities, the secret organizations, and the hidden networks of resistance to slavery?

In spite of contrary reactions, including apparent submission which, in any case, could not have been sincere nor desired, a like solidarity and desire for liberty permeated the slave world. To the surprise of the colonists, the future would show that the general slave revolt was aided by house servants with their ears to the ground in the big house,<sup>72</sup> by the very drivers who nevertheless filled the role of assistant executioners in the work gangs, who were scorned for their black skin yet heaped with advantages, favors, and privileges, harvesting the master's confidence as well as the fear of the slaves. The fact is both surprising and suggestive. But we move too swiftly. The history of marronage is a long one, full of sudden starts and retrogressions, always dynamic. For a full understanding, it must be discovered step

by step and patiently analyzed in depth so as to reveal its progression. For the time being we will consider the spirit of liberty that marronage itself encouraged. The descriptions leave not the slightest doubt on this subject. Nor does history.

In reality, Saint-Domingue was faced with the problem of Africans difficult to contain. This native pride was sharply characterized, as were the strengths or defects, the traditions, customs and beliefs which marked the Haitian people, direct descendants of the slave. Assuredly, slavery and its sequelae, association with liberty, ethnic crossings, diverse cultural influences, and our own conditions of life have kneaded and ground this ancestral heritage in their crucible. In spite of this, some moral or physical characteristics will have been perpetuated or strengthened by the dominant imprint of Africa: The increase in height, the refinement by Western standards of facial features, the sculptured beauty of the women and their brightness of eye, the dazzling smile of which each burst with its whiteness of teeth was nourished by the milk of centuries before being entrusted to the care of sugar cane; the lines of the neck, the queenly bearing fashioned by the carrying of heavy baskets balanced on the head over trails tracked by so many generations, their liking for dress and ornamentation, the graceful sway of their walk; a decided artistic sense with an innate gift for dance, music, and painting. A patient resignation and a smiling philosophy of life. A liking for palaver and also—why hide it—a certain propensity for subterfuge, mischievousness, libertine ways, vagueness, love of exaggeration and the abuse of authority. It would be a mistake to attempt, in passing, an indication of the amount and extent of the heritage in every domain.

A characteristic native pride is precisely the essential quality denied the slave in the restricted listings of the reasons for marronage. Far too long has this possibly natural ideal of liberty been contested. Consequently, the history of marronage has been enmeshed in reservations and the reproaches heaped so unjustly on the Haitian school. It is however a matter of evidence.

Was it by accident that in his well-known, now-classic chart of the "nations" which insured the populating of the colony that Moreau de Saint-Méry strove to emphasize that almost all the Africans imported to Saint-Domingue were by nature quick to rebellion? Here are Saint-Méry's statements, to which every historian of Saint-Domingue has indiscriminately referred without ever, and with absolutely no exceptions, having sought to extract therefrom the notations relating to the natural pride of the African "nations" brought to Saint-Domingue in the slave trade. Yet it is important information that no one has ever been able to contest, and contained in a document that no historian or essayist has ever ceased to draw upon with confidence and respect as being the one and true Genesis of the populating of the Antilles by the black victims of the slave trade.

What does Saint-Méry have to say?<sup>73</sup>



The Senegalese intelligent . . . warlike and seasoned . . . demonstrate in their mentality the marks of a superior species. [The Yolofs] are very much the same. [The Cangas, Mesurades, Bourriquis, Miserables are] very tough blacks, quick to revolt. [The Minas, Agouas, Socos, the Caplaous and the Fantins from the Gold Coast] generally very intelligent [are] very proud, quick to take their own lives . . . their haughty character makes it difficult to manage them.

Intelligence is a characteristic common to all the Africans of the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast . . . of whom the Aradas and Dahomeys are well known for their ferocity. The Ibos and Minas hang themselves in groups and many colonists dread buying any of them. [The Mozambiques are] very intelligent. . . . One cannot flatter oneself with having bent them to servitude.

As for the Mondongos, Mousombés and Malimbés, Saint-Méry, as though to emphasize their scarcely gentle customs, drew attention to "their sharpened incisors." Sufficiently suggestive?

To complete the listing of the basic elements in the peopling of Saint-Domingue, there remain the Mandingos, and the Bambaras, of whom it is said—this is by no means apparent—that they can be bent to servitude; the minor groups of Peuls, Quiambas, and Mokos, whose importation was limited; and finally the Congos from the Angola and Congo kingdoms, who were in the eighteenth century "the most numerous imports to Saint-Domingue."

Now it happens—and we shall see this in the analysis of Maroon descriptions—that these same slaves, so much in demand for "their happy and sprightly character" and reputed to be "gentle and malleable," were by far the most inclined to be Maroons.<sup>74</sup> Clearly, even taking into account their numerical importance in the populating of the colony, their percentage of Maroons is proportionately greater than that of the other "nations." The supposedly native adaptiveness<sup>75</sup> of the African to slavery was, all things taken into account, a legend difficult to kill. It will be granted that the Saint-Domingue slave, in the beginning Sudanese and Guinean, then in dominant proportion Bantu, because of their very origins must have ill adapted to bondage and that they could and did have the desire to free themselves from servitude.

Is there any other explanation for the miracle of the eruption on the world stage of a people by its own efforts liberating itself from chains and crowning with an extraordinary and unique epic the multiple, incessant, and anonymous exploits of the Maroons of Liberty?

We have shown in these preliminary notes that the so-called classic reasons for marronage were abusively incomplete and limited. We believe we have proved that marronage could also have been dependent on a cause that was none other than slave insubordination and the desire for freedom. It will now be a question of determining if these Maroons in freedom were as

numerous as we believe or were simply exceptions. What was their real percentage in slave flights? Put another way, was marronage for the most part a simple slave sickness, related to chance and accidental causes, or was it a powerful, tenacious, incessant, and at times organized battle against the regime?

Commentaries, deductions, and statements however pertinent, no longer suffice. Only the facts can, from this point on, count in the debate we intend to engage for the honor of the Haitian school.

We must now proceed to the examination—a fairly intensive examination—of Maroon descriptions. These advertisements are numerous and suggestive enough for deepening the inquiry and for providing a serious basis for examination. It is especially within them that a precise answer to these inquiries may still be found. Are not these descriptions the last available rafts on which we may journey to a rendezvous with the Saint-Domingue Maroons on the shores of the past? What is proposed at this point is a detailed analysis of Maroon descriptions which, as we have seen, shed new light on the history of marronage, as it does on the unfamiliar face of the Saint-Domingue slave.

Spread over some thirty years, 1764 to 1793, these descriptions number in the thousands. The total of forty-eight thousand Maroons described or simply announced in the advertisements represents a solid base for investigation and analysis. The physical and other slave characteristics, the various forms of marronage, the names, status and occupation of proprietors or fugitives, the latter's age, sex, height, national origin, the places where they were recaptured, their clothes, evidences of the illnesses or the cruelties of slavery—all these constitute a very rich, still-unexplored documentation. We can thus be on our way toward important if not final conclusions.

For this analysis, we will group information provided by the following newspapers, all part of the important collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris and the Bibliothèque de Moreau de Saint-Méry, kept in the Archives de la France d'outre-mer also in Paris:

*La Gazette de Saint-Domingue*

*Avis divers et petites Affiches Américaines*

*Les Affiches Américaines (Supplément et Feuille du Cap Français)*

*Journal de l'Assemblée provinciale de la partie du Nord de Saint-Domingue et Nouvelles de Saint-Domingue*

*Gazette de Saint-Domingue et Affiches Américaines*

*Courier de Saint-Domingue et Affiches Américaines*

*Courier National de Saint-Domingue*

*Moniteur général de la partie française de Saint-Domingue*

*Journal général de Saint-Domingue*

*Assemblée coloniale de la partie française de Saint-Domingue*

*Procès-verbaux des séances et Journal des Débats*

*La Sentinelle du Peuple or Journal des Séances et Procès-verbaux de*



*l'Assemblée coloniale*  
*Journal politique de Saint-Domingue*, edited by a member of the Assemblée  
 coloniale  
*La Gazette du Jour*  
*Journal de Port-au-Prince*  
*L'Observateur colonial*  
*La Gazette des Cayes*  
*Affiches Américaines*  
*Journal des Révolutions de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue*  
*L'Aviseur du Sud*  
*Bulletin officiel de Saint-Domingue* (1)<sup>76</sup>

To facilitate the examination of these descriptions and the varied information to be found in the journals, we have organized the rest of this book into the following sections developed consecutively and in detail:

Maroon Characteristics  
 The Victims of Marronage  
 Analysis of Marronage  
 A Chronology of Marronage

#### NOTES, pp. 83-108

1. In an account of his stay in Saint-Domingue published in 1787 and cited by Vaisière, p. 274, Count de C. describes the gay, comfortable, well-ventilated houses in Cap which, nevertheless, he sometimes considered to be in bad taste. "The architects," he assures, "are frequently none other than slaves."
2. Brushing the teeth was unknown in the France of that era. This health habit is rather recent in Europe and has not evolved as much as one might think. The Paris daily, *Le Monde*, of 24 March 1972 reported as follows: "One Frenchman in four uses a toothbrush. In 1970 in more than fifteen percent of the households five people used the same toothbrush. Overall, fewer than 10 percent of the French people regularly clean their teeth."
3. See Jean Fouchard, *Les Marrons du Syllabaire*.
4. The *méringue* derived from the *carabinier* and has become our national dance. It is certain that the *méringue* was known, sung, and danced in its original form during the colonial period. The word *méringue* derives from the *mouringue* dance of the Mozambiques. See our work, *La méringue, danse nationale d'Haïti*. *Lambi* is a seashell. *Banza* is an African violin.
5. Saint-Méry, I, 109.
6. Fouchard, *Le Théâtre à Saint-Domingue, Artistes et répertoire des scènes de Saint-Domingue*.
7. Fouchard, *Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue*.
8. On colonial guildives Dutrone la Couture published a 383-page abstract on cane recommending replacing the sugar boilers.
9. See Madiou: *Histoire d'Haïti*, I, p. 44. In 1842, rush mattings weighing 335,212 pounds were exported from Haïti.
10. King of France and of Navarre, Prince of Léogâne. . . . This, according to P.

Labat, was the title offered the king by the Conseil Supérieur de Saint-Domingue and which he refused.

11. S.A.A. 7 February and A.A. 21 April 1784.
12. Fouchard: *Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue*.
13. S.A.A. 11 September 1784.
14. In the noisy debates of the Estates-General, the contrary was declared: "Everybody knows that the latter (the whites) are the haves and do nothing; that the others (the slaves) direct and perform the work, do everything. . . ." Speech by Viefville des Essarts.
15. Saint-Méry, I, 47.
16. Father Cabon, I, 93.
17. The sayings were "The good people of Guadeloupe," "the Martinique gentlemen" and "the lords of Saint-Domingue."
18. Malenfant, cited in *Les Marrons du Syllabaire*, pp. 15-16.
19. Descourtilz, 111, p. 143.
20. According to Cornevin, *Histoire de L'Afrique* II, 273, "Ifé Art (terra cotta and bronze) may be dated from the thirteenth century."
21. On this subject, see an interesting article in *Le Monde*, Paris, 9 February 1971.
22. Descourtilz, 111, p. 116.
23. Cited by Louis E. Elie, *Histoire d'Haiti*.
24. Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *op. cit.*, I, 141.
25. Anténor Firmin, *Le Président Roosevelt et la République d'Haiti*, 1905, p. 238.
26. Pamphile de Lacroix, II, 277.
27. Firmin, *op. cit.*, p. 245.
28. Schoelcher's remark.
29. Cabon, I, 90.
30. Dutertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, Paris 1762, t. II, pp. 534-537 (4° Lk 12 BNP). Here is Father Dutertre's exact statement placed in context: "I don't want to deny that the desire for freedom which is natural to all men may be a predominant reason for slaves running away since they are neither stupid or so ignorant not to understand the excellence of the good they have lost. However, I dare say that whatever passion for liberty with which nature endows them as well as all other men this is not the strongest motive which drives them to escape servitude through flight. . . ." [For the blacks, according to Dutertre] "the whole world is their Fatherland so long as it provides them food and drink. They sell themselves off to escape the hardships of their own land; they consider themselves happier to be slaves when they are passably fed and treated kindly and this is why we must seek other reasons for their flight than the desire for freedom."
31. Speaking of the Haitian school and citing the works of Jean Price Mars, Etienne Charlier and Jean Fouchard, Mr. Debbasch declares in text: "Theirs is biased, violent history, developed upon gratuitous assertions and scornful, if need be, of the most incontestable facts."
32. Yvan Debbasch, *Le marronage: Essai sur la désertion de l'esclave antillais*, in *L'Année Sociologique*, 3<sup>e</sup> série, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1962, 1963, p. 40.
33. Debbasch, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
34. See *Revue d'Histoire des Colonies Françaises*, January-February 1929, p. 72. Archives Nationales FE 192 and 27 AP 12. Papiers François de Neufchâteau.
35. In Brazil Gilberto Freyre has published many runaway-slave advertisements. As in Guyana, Jamaica or Martinique, marronage objectives in Brazil were the same and vested the fugitives with the same behavior, with massive and periodic rebellions. In Mexico the story of the Maroon leader Yanga is known. His name was



- given to St. Lorenzo de los Negros, a town in the state of Vera Cruz. See Dr. José Pavia Crespo: *Mexico a través los siglos*, Tome III.
36. The term is from Moreau de Saint-Méry I, 45.
  37. See Adrien Dessales, *Histoire générale des Antilles*.
  38. Beaubrun Ardouin, *Histoire d'Haiti*, I, 49.
  39. Letter from the minister to the administrators of Guyana. See also the work of Father Gisler, in which are cited this document (*op. cit.*, p. 110) and similar letters to the administration at Saint-Domingue.
  40. Peytraud, *op. cit.*, p. 343.
  41. Gaston Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
  42. P. de Vaissière, *op. cit.*, II, p. 541.
  43. Father Cabon, *op. cit.*, II, p. 541.
  44. Debien, *op. cit.*, pp. 41, 43.
  45. *A.A.*, 18 June 1783.
  46. *A.A.*, 7 January 1784.
  47. Herb doctor.
  48. This evaluation is taken from *Rançon du Génie ou la Leçon de Toussaint-Louverture*, written by our late lamented colleague, Timoléon C. Brutus, 1945, I, p. 54.
  49. Not only did Suzanne Simon Baptiste know how to read and write, but she had achieved a higher level of education than Toussaint Bréda. Dr. Marvel Chatillon, an eminent physician and history buff, resident some twenty years in Guadeloupe, has among his rich collection the only letter extant signed by Suzanne Simon. The handwriting is much firmer and the phrasing less awkward than in the very rare notes and letters in Toussaint's own hand. Thus we can appreciate that Toussaint would have chosen to join his life and destiny with this worthy companion.
  50. Placide, the son of a colored man, will nevertheless be more faithfully attached to his adopted father. In the course of his moving about Toussaint was to have two natural children: a son, Didine-Gustave, and a daughter, Zizine, born respectively at Léogâne and Artibonite. Attributed to him is a longstanding relationship with a Rossignol-Desdunes, and with Mme. Descaux, a rich Gonaïves créole who had a daughter already ten years old in 1791 (*Gazette de S.D.*), not to mention "the locks of hair and love letters" which General Boudet supposedly discovered either in a chest or a cupboard in Port-au-Prince. And the attribution of direct descendants outside the line of Isaac which a number of Haitian families claim? Thomas Madiou mentions a lady Fisson, "a white woman of rare beauty," supposedly Toussaint's mistress. This author tends to paint Toussaint as a gallant, fond of women of whatever color whose favors he obtained on the strength of his authority, not hesitating "to boldly lay hands on their charms."
  51. A very young Geneviève was sold to a white man who took her to Cayes. See Ardouin, Tome V, p. 44.
  52. He would be grandfather to Charles Séguy Villevalleix in turn reputed to be descended from a son whom Sonthonax is said to have fathered during his long and passionate affair with Eugénie Bléjac. What is most reliably known is that, before meeting Sonthonax, Eugénie had married a Mr. Villeavaleix. Furthermore it is as Mme. Villeavaleix that she is listed upon departure of *L'Indien*, aboard which Sonthonax, ousted by Toussaint-Louverture, embarked in the roadstead off Cap 24 August 1796 (7 Fructidor).
  53. G. Debien, *Etudes Antillaises*, Paris, 1956. See *Les débuts de la révolution de Saint-Domingue vus des plantations Bréda*.
  54. *Journal général de Saint-Domingue*, 3 Novembre 1790.
  55. *A. F.* II 210, n. 97. Cited by H. P. Sannon in *Toussaint-Louverture I*, p. 1.

56. Sannon I, 88. Pauléus Sannon has consulted at length documents on the still unsolved mystery of Toussaint's secret life.
57. B. Ardouin, *Etudes sur l'Histoire d'Haïti*, edition François Delencour, I, 51.
58. Blanche Maurel: *Le vent du large ou le destin tourmenté de Jean-Baptiste Gérard, colon de Saint-Domingue*, p. 227.
59. Bryan Edwards: *Histoire de Saint-Domingue depuis 1789*. Paris 1812, p. 28.
60. Mss. 880. Bibliothèque de Nantes. See Jean Fouchard, *Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue*, p. 49.
61. Hilliard d'Auberteuil. The figure given seems highly exaggerated.
62. *A.A.*, 19 October 1783.
63. *S.A.A.*, 18 June 1783.
64. *S.A.A.*, 20 July 1771.
65. Descourtilz, *op. cit.*, III, 131.
66. *Les Jacobins noirs*, Gallimard, Paris, 1949, p. 81.
67. Eugene was also the name of the son of Marie-Charlotte, wife of Rolin des Cayes, who, like René, was a daughter of Louis le Pays and Marie Beaudouin. René put up for sale (*Gazette de S.D.*, 27 April 1791) a plantation in Etang des Roseaux, four leagues from the city of Cayes comprising one hundred carreaux in coffee, a mill, warehouse, five slave houses and thirty-four slaves.
68. Notes from Duraciné Pouilh. See the anonymous brochure *A la mémoire d'Eugène Bourjolly*, issued at Port-au-Prince, by Imprimerie Amblard. Eugène Bourjolly, his studies completed, had rejoined his mother who had gone back to the country. This Ibo woman, who became the mother of Eugène Bourjolly—the author's great grandfather on the maternal side—was called Choune. She died at age 105 in l'Anse-à-Veau long after Independence.
69. Edwards, *op. cit.*, 105.
70. G. Debien, *Le Marronage aux Antilles Françaises au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Caribbean Studies, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, 1966, p. 41.
71. Girod Chantrans, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
72. Thanks to the house slaves, the blacks knew everything that was going on; for the very one who seemed devoted to his master in maintaining slavery was but a spy dissembling with an art known only to Africans and to which Europeans always fell prey." Malenfant, p. 114.
73. Saint-Méry, I, pp. 47-54.
74. Saint-Méry nevertheless said of the Congos: "They can be reproached with being a bit inclined to flight."
75. Like the always great number of maroons, the permanence of the revolts tends to cast serious doubt on the justification for this partisan assertion." Gaston Martin, *op. cit.*, 102.
76. On the Saint-Domingue press, see the list by M. A. Ménier and G. Debien completing Father Cabon's list, in *Revue d'Histoire des Colonies*, Tome XXXVI, 1949, 3rd and 4th trimesters, nos. 12-128, pp. 424-475.



## IV

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### MAROON CHARACTERISTICS

## National Origins

ALMOST ALWAYS public notices specified the "national origin" of the Maroon. The advertisements of arrivals of slave cargoes and of slave sales also identify the source of the cargoes. Thus it is indicated from what part of Africa the slave was uprooted for transport to Saint-Domingue. As for Maroons, the failure to obtain this information from those who were imprisoned or sold as strays was due to the fact that many of the newly arrived Africans persistently refused to give any information whatsoever, "refusing to tell," or else unable, sometimes for want of interpreters, to make themselves understood, "unable to tell own name or master's."

When the record specifically states, "refuses to talk," it is very clear that the statement refers to a confirmed rebel, inflexible in his hatred of slavery and determined to seize the first opportunity for a new escape attempt. A few of these aggressive, determined Maroons even succeeded in escaping from jail. The records show a number of these escapes. Throughout, the designations of "national" origins are current and profuse. As absolutely new data, they serve to clarify the history of the slave trade, which is the history of the populating of the Haitian nation. In addition, the slave trade will be shown to have in more general fashion profoundly affected three continents in different ways: feudal and imperialistic, the *Europe* of slave ships and traffickers in African slaves; an *Africa* mutilated and torn asunder, and over three centuries drained of millions of her most robust sons and daughters who were to become easy prey to colonial exploitation, Africa for so long denied the road to rediscovery of its original culture; *America*, recipient of this traffic, sown with suffering and revolts for bringing forth in grief so many peoples still bearing the mark of Africa.

Although marked by invasions, conquests, periodic spurts from and returns to barbarism (and thus strewn with the cadavers of civilizations) history offers no example of a more dramatic upheaval, of the transfer of captured populations on such a scale, or of a stranger experience in adaptation. Nor does history reveal a like economic and demographic upheaval of so scandalous a commercial operation of such scandalous proportions involving the exploitation of a continent, Africa, in order to exploit the resources of a second continent, America, for the profit of a third continent, Europe.



The populating of Saint-Domingue by the slave trade drew upon a vast geographic area embracing an infinity of nations or peoples given diverse and incorrect designations, difficult to differentiate. Of these, the listing provided by Moreau de Saint-Méry, also the listing compiled by Robert Richard from the Saint-Domingue Notary Records,<sup>1</sup> and the ethnic descriptions by Descourtillz and by Malenfant present us with such a diversity as can lead only to confusion. We ourselves have added to these lists certain designations taken from the Saint-Domingue press and apparently indicative for the most part of villages rather than actual ethnic groups.

Quite fortunately, after 1780 the Cap and Port-au-Prince newspapers tended to reduce the profusion of localities in describing slaves, Maroons, or blacks for sale in the markets to the great ethnic groups to which they belonged. It is because of this that the following compilation is a sort of random collection, making it very difficult to extract the most solid contributions and the correct elements in the basic formation of the Haitian people:

Aida, Aguia or Aïa, Arada, Aminos, Akréens, Assianthéens, Angouas, Adiola, Adou, Altapa, Aoussas, Bambara, Bana Banguia, Bibi, Bary, Binguelle, Bobo, Beurnou, Bissayol, Blancs or Albinos, Bouriquis, Boulard, Balou, Bisi, Caplaou, Congos, Franc-Congo, Haut Congo, Bas Congo, Coto-coli, Crépéens, Coussa, Chouchou, Canga, Congos-ontégué, Coucouly, Coucha, Corossol, Coulange, Coela, Daban, Dangoua, Dombot, Dioula;

Fida, Fouida, Fantin, Fonds, Foules, Giuola, Gabon, Gamba, Gabary, Guimba, Ibos, Kiffes, Limba, Mozambiques, Maïs, Maquouas, Mandingues, Malingues, Mazombis, Moussombis, Mines, Misérables, Mokos, Mounanau, Mondongues, Mallay, Mombala, Mefougi, Mayombé, Maindou, Malé, Molo, Mozazi, Moucou, Mayonca;

Nago, Nenne, Ouanouy, Ouaires, Ouatizi, Poulards, Phylanis, Quichi, Sangala, Solongo, Souraca, Songui, Souba, Senegal, Socos, Sosso, Sozo, Soudy, Tapa, Thopa, Tenemen, Thiambas or Tiambas, Tacoua, Timbou, Urba, Yoloofs, Yobo, Yaguia, Yaya, Zozeau.

As readily seen, one gets lost among the different appellations of groups or subgroups among differing designations for the same ethnic groups, as well as in the naming of little cantons not located geographically, not to mention the different ways of spelling the same "nation."

It would seem less confusing to use only the ethnic descriptions drawn for the most part from announcements of slave sales and from the descriptions of Maroons. Particularly after 1780, public announcements of runaway slaves depended less on the names of subgroups for these designations while, beginning in 1764, sales bulletins generally indicated national origins, or at least in the larger sense, the great ethnic groups, with accuracy. From that period these announcements lead us more surely along the route to determining the "nations" and groups actually representing the original roots of the Haitian people. On this we will elaborate subsequently. For the moment, on

the basis of these contemporary descriptions we will attempt to establish three major categories under which these "nations"—forebears of the Haitian people—may be grouped, keeping in mind the geographic boundaries suggested by Saint-Méry in his guide to the nomenclature of the slave trade to Saint-Domingue.

To us the most simple classification is the one adopted by Father Cabon. It is in any case less hazardous than a classification based solely on the spread of a religion—Islamized slaves, for example—or upon a common language or the melding of common political or social interests. Also to be considered are the upheavals that had already marked the dismantling of certain West African kingdoms, mutations, transfers, and new organizations of populations during civil wars and invasions that preceded the slave trade.

The pedantic Africologist will undoubtedly find here and there in the proposed classification some point of detail not in conformity with these basic norms. Nevertheless, this classification is at once the closest to reality and the one that best registers within its broad design the origins of our Saint-Domingue ancestors.

### *Sudanese*

Under this heading will be grouped the various races of the West African littoral or the neighboring communities along the borders of the Senegal, the Gambia, and the Niger, beginning with the slave ports of St. Louis, then down to Gorée and continuing south to the Cape of Palms: Senegalese, Yolloffs or Ouloffs, Calvaires, Peuls or Poulards, Toucouleurs, Bambaras, Mandingos, Bissagots, and Sossos.

### *Guineans*

The peoples living farther south, though still north of the equator, in all of the region bathed by the Gulf of Guinea and especially including the Ivory Coast, the Slave Coast, and the Gold Coast: Cangas, Bourriquis, Misérables, Mesurades, Caplaous, Nagos, Mines, Minas, Yorubas, Thiambas, Fonds, Agousas, Socos, Fantins, Mahis, Dahomets, Aradas, Cotocolis, Fidas, Haoussas, Ibos and the Mokos of Benin.

### *Bantus*

Those living below the equator, principally in the Congo and Angola kingdoms, which marked the limits of the French slave trade: Congos, Francs Congos, Mousombis, Mondongues, Malimbés, Angoles. To these will be added, toward the end of the colonial period, the Mozambiques who were, together with a very small handful of Africans of different origins from Madagascar and from the Isle of Maurice,<sup>2</sup> the only representatives from East Africa.

It is generally conceded that the populating of Saint-Domingue by the



slave trade was first assured by the Sudanese group and then by drawing upon the Guinean groups (Guinea Coast and Gold Coast) and the Bantu group (Congo, Angolas, Mozambiques). Historians and ethnologists have grappled with this major problem, anxious to discover our true origins, without arriving at solid proof or definitive conclusions. One certain fact is that the slave trade to the colony was originally limited to the slave ports of St. Louis and Gorée, bringing to Saint-Domingue captive Senegalese, Yolofo, Calvary, Peuls, Bambaras, and Mandingos among others.

The confusion begins with the second phase of slave importation to Saint-Domingue. If it is known that the Guinean group early replaced the Sudanese group in supplying the colony with bois d'ébène, scarcely any attention has been paid to the predominance during the later colonization of the "arrivals" of the Guinean group that was then continuing or of the Bantu group described in force during the same period. Now the prime purpose of every inquiry into this subject is to reveal clearly our original roots, that is, the larger ethnic groups which during the last half century before independence might have been our nearest ancestors, those who actually marked us with their moral or physical characteristics or more deeply influenced and rounded our cultural heritage.

Were they Guineans or Bantus? There is no precise answer to this question. In search of the key to this enigma we have examined in turn Voodoo and oral traditions, correspondence of the colonists, Saint-Domingue notary records, bills of lading of slave-ship owners, and the rolls of work gangs, without arriving at data sufficiently precise to satisfy our legitimate interest in the search for our own genealogies.

Let us examine a bit these different approaches. First, Voodoo and our oral traditions. Certain writers have persuaded themselves that the establishment of Voodoo and its persistent and clear domination as a popular religion among so many other animist beliefs or others from areas foreign to the Guinea and Gold Coasts represents undeniable proof of the preponderance in Saint-Domingue of slaves from Dahomey. However attractive, the hypothesis cannot withstand analysis. Clearly it is contrary to the slave descriptions or to work-gang inventories. On the one hand, these substantiate the numerical superiority of the Congo in marronage and, on the other, they do not at any time reveal any substantial influx of Dahomeans in the populating of Saint-Domingue. In general, far from being limited to a Dahomey quite hostile to the slave trade, the influx is Arada. If Voodoo originating in Dahomey was able to establish and consolidate itself in the colony, it was not by any means due to the presence of any massive number of slaves from Dahomey. Was there ever indeed such a massive presence? Certainly one must search elsewhere for the reasons that favored implantation and dominance of Voodoo. First, "like all the pagan religions of the Guinean belt, the most structured in all the African continent,"<sup>3</sup> Voodoo could offer a greater attraction to the mind of the slaves. Yet in fact, the Dahomean input,

however real and important to the formation of Voodoo, is by no means the exclusive element and sole determinant. In a recent paper, Mme. Lilas Desquiron<sup>4</sup> focused attention on the considerable input of the Congos of the Bantu group in the formation of Haitian Voodoo and on the syncretism, revealed and copiously analyzed by most of our ethnologists, pertaining for the most part to accretions to the Catholic religion. Apparently then, because of the disparate character of its origins, Voodoo cannot serve to prove either Bantu or Guinean predominance in the populating of Saint-Domingue. Certainly for a long time both "Guinea" and "Congo" equally symbolized Africa toward the end of the colonization period. Did not Macaya, the Maroon chieftain, recognize the king of the Congo as the "born master of all the blacks," and was it not a Congolese chant which became, even before the ceremony at Bois-Caïman,\* the rallying hymn of the rebels, of the Voodoo meetings and dances?<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the case, if in their numerous couplets the Voodoo chants evoke African gods, whether the rites are *Rada* or *Petro*, they are in every instance combined in a single appeal without the slightest concern about revealing either Bantu or Guinean predominance. At least this is what we have observed in the litanies of the "loas,"\*\* as they have been reported by Haitian and other writers interested in our popular religion:

Mrin sôti lan Guinin, mrin sôti Guéléfé (Ifé) . . . palez hounsiss congos  
lan Guinin . . . oh té-léguey . . . Legba Petro, legba Ibo, legba Dahoumin,  
legba Allada, legba Badagri. . . †

The litany, "Prayer of Djor," still better expresses the complement of "nations" which have contributed to the formation of the Haitian community, without the slightest clue to the predominance of any one group:

Call them all everyone of them from Africa's Guinea, from all the nations: Rada (Aradas), Ibo, Capaloa, en-mine (Amine, Mine), Mondongue, Mandingo, Senigal (Senegal), Canga, Congo, Nago, Danhomé (Dahomey), Wangol, Mahi, Foula, Mayombé, Fon, Bambara, Hausa, Congo-Franc . . .<sup>6</sup>

Thus it appears that the Voodoo chants reflect more the recognition of "loas" of all the "nations" populating Saint-Domingue, more an affirmation of the plurality of inputs to the formation of Voodoo itself than an ethnic distribution.<sup>7</sup>

\* The wooded camp site where the revolt of the slaves was touched off in a dramatic Voodoo ceremony.

\*\* Voodoo Spirits, gods.

† "I come from Guinea, I come from Ife. Oh Congo *hounsiss*! Invoke the shades of Petro, of Ibo and Dahomey, of Allada and of Badagri." Hounsiss, usually women, have a special role in Voodoo ceremony. They are responsible for invoking the spirits in song and dance.



Will it be more fruitful to delve into the correspondence of the colonists, the testimony of historians contemporary to the epoch, the official work-gang rosters, or the shipping lists of slave-ship owners? Colonial documentation provides no precise responses to our questions about the numerical predominance of either Guinean or Bantu at the end of the colonial period. It is certain, however, that progressively closer scrutiny of slave inventories, increasing, for example, to the extent that new archival materials are uncovered, will provide an increasingly closer approach. For the period in question we will discover, over the long run, the most up-to-date composition of work gangs in the sugar mills, in the indigo factories, on coffee plantations in the north, in the west or in the southern belt. Was it a matter of Guineans being in the majority in the sugar mills or of Bantus in the majority in the coffee mills? At the end of the colonial period even before the slacking off and the suppression of the regular slave trade, what was the actual percentage of bossales and creoles working in the field gangs, as house-servants, or in the factories? This research has but barely begun. It will be long and difficult, all the more so for the fact that such inventories are rarely found. From time to time, a new dossier is discovered here or there in some dusty cupboard. We would need a rather large number of inventories of this type to provide a basis for solid conclusions. We are far from this realization. Debien, whose rather considerable efforts in pursuit of enlightenment on these matters can never be sufficiently extolled, has earned the credit for having analyzed almost a hundred work-gang rosters, and as a result of these studies has compiled a documentation of inestimable value. In a parallel attempt to fix the origins of the Antillean slaves, he has delved into even more rare bills of lading of slave-ship outfitters only to arrive at the conclusion that these documents in no way settle the debate. None of the papers examined to date indicate with any specificity the breakdown of the cargoes by ethnicity, although the ports of registry of the slave ships (Nantes, La Rochelle, Le Havre, Bordeaux, Lorient, Marseille, Saint-Malo, Honfleur) are known and sometimes the duration as well as the ship's tonnage. There remain for the moment the descriptions and advertisements in the Saint-Domingue press.

There are two types of descriptions. The one relates to slaves for sale on the occasion of the departure of some colonial preparing to leave Saint-Domingue for temporary or final return to France. These announcements lump together domestic slaves, creole blacks, bossales, or creolized slaves of such a diversity of African origins that it is difficult to determine if there are in these occasional sales more Congos than creoles, or more Aradas than Nagos or Ibos. Furthermore, these announcements cover, after all, only a very small fraction of the servile mass, principally, in general, the domestic blacks. With more justifiable interest, one turns to the advertisements of runaway slaves in flight, in jail, or on sale after marronage. Immediately the very large number of these ads provides an extremely important base for investigation. They comprise no less than forty-eight thousand announce-

ments spread over a period of some thirty years. With few exceptions, all of them indicate the "nation" of the fugitives. A first objection would be that descriptions referring to Maroons necessarily omit the "nations" not indulging in marronage. But none exists. A more serious handicap is that the listings of Maroons do not precisely reveal the real proportion of each "nation" in Saint-Domingue. They do show in nonetheless suggestive example the proportion of Maroons from each "nation"—an observation in itself extremely important. These descriptions indisputably reveal a distinct predominance of Congo slaves in marronage. The predominance held throughout the years 1764-1793 until the last notices appearing in the Saint-Domingue press.

Was there actually a greater number of Congos, or was it simply that among the fugitive slaves of the various nations who were caught the Congos were most inclined to marronage—even though as a matter of fact they had the reputation among colonists of being the most sprightly and the most tractable? In the following table, for example, it will be seen that while in 1764 and 1765 or in 1766, the Congos were most frequently represented among the fugitive slaves, for these very years slave importations consisted largely of groups from the Guinea Coast and the Gold Coast. It seems scarcely feasible to dispute the evidence that the Congos were at the same time both recalcitrant and given to running away and that they were also the most numerous of the slaves brought to Saint-Domingue at the close of the colonial epoch. The bulletins announcing slave-ship arrivals support this latter conclusion. We can show this not without in all honesty underscoring the gaps in these last notices. The latter are of two types: those reporting ship arrivals, and those having to do with public sales of cargoes.

Descriptions of Maroons do not give precise geographic detail and do not always indicate the exact coastal region where the slave was "traded." They group together in a very loose way those who are Senegalese, Aradas, Mandingoes, Congos, Mozambiques. According to Moreau Saint-Méry, "When the slaves are asked for their birthplace they give the region which the traders interpret as kingdom."<sup>8</sup>

In contrast, the announcements of slave-ship arrivals almost always indicated the origin of the cargo, for example: arriving from the Guinea Coast, from Senegal, and so forth. Sometimes they indicated the African port from which the vessel set sail: Badagris, Gabinde, Gorée, Porto-Novo; from Aunis, from Malimbe, and so forth.

Unfortunately the Saint-Domingue press, as though to be consistent with the already observed colonial penchant for inexactitude, at times provided information contributing to a certain amount of confusion. Toward the end of the colonial period, which saw the beginnings of the Saint-Domingue press, it became the habit, especially around 1783 to 1785, to lump under the general heading "Gold Coast" cargoes of Guinean Aradas with Congos of the Bantu group, or with Senegalese of the Sudanese group. The designation



Gold Coast was thus quite elastic. It embraced not only "nations" belonging to the true Guinean group, that is to say of the actual Gold Coast, but also at times included Congos fortuitously placed under this label. Thus we see the designation "Gold Coast" extended to Guineans, Sudanese and Bantus, to indicate respectively Congo, Angola, Senegal, Dahomey and even Mozambique. At the same time, slave centers such as Malimbe, Porto-Novo, Ardre or Adra, Juda, Anamabou, Gorée, Badagris—none of which belongs either to the geographic or ethnic zone of the Gold Coast—were likewise designated Gold Coast. Sometimes, and this is less grievous an error, slaves shipped from Angola and from Mozambique and, it must be added, related to each other, were listed as Congos.<sup>9</sup>

Here, taken from current and correct notices, are some examples of the liberties taken with geography. They give a more accurate idea of the announcements of slave-ship arrivals in Saint-Domingue during the years for which we have most frequently noted these contradictions. They are far from being grievous errors, and in any case, since they are easy to correct, we have attempted to do so here in order to avoid ambiguous conclusions:

- The *Actif*, from Malimbe, Angola Coast, with 342 head of slaves
- The *Iris*, arriving with 850 Negroes from Porto-Nôve, Gold Coast
- The *Saint-Esprit* from Badagris with a fine cargo of Arada Negroes
- The *Trois Frères*, arriving from Gabinde with 400 Africans
- The *Amour*, from Guinea with 365 slaves
- A cargo, arriving from Aunis, Gold Coast
- The *Brune*, arriving from Juda, Gold Coast, with 360 Negroes from Ardre
- A slave ship from Juda, true Gold Coast
- The *Castries*, from Sénégal, Gold Coast
- The *Jérémie* and the *Prince Noir*, arriving from Juda and from Anamabou, real Gold Coast
- The *Cygogne* from Port-Novo, Gold Coast
- The *Ville de Nantes*, arriving from the Gold Coast with 300 Aradas
- The *Alexander* from Sierra Leone
- The *Clary*, arriving from Aquila, Mozambique Coast<sup>10</sup>
- The *Aunis*, arriving from the Angola Coast with a superb shipload in excellent condition after a crossing of thirty-eight days from Malimbe
- The *Blouin*, from Gabon with 126 Africans
- The *Ceres*, from Galbard (undoubtedly Calabar)
- The *Cinq Cousines*, arriving from Gabinde, Angola Coast with 507 negroes
- The *Breton*, arriving from the Gold Coast with three hundred Arada negroes
- The *Actif*, from Quiola
- The *Coeurs Unis*, arriving from Angola with a cargo of 250 head of Congos
- The *Bonne Amitié*, sailing from Sierra-Leone
- The *Maréchal de Mouchi*, sailing from Malimbe, Angola Coast with 810 Negroes
- The *Flore*, from Nantes, arriving with 310 Congos picked up at Mozambique
- The *Gustave-Adolphe*, arriving from Gorée, Senegal

- The *Saint-Esprit*, sailing from Onis with 508 Aradas, Gold Coast  
 The *Roi Solomon*, arriving from Gorée, Gold Coast  
 The *Pactole*, from Badagris, Gold Coast with a cargo comprising the best nations, such as Arada, Haoussa, Nago, Fonds, Dahomey, and so forth  
 The *Homme Instruit*, sailing from the Angola Coast with a cargo of Congos  
 The *Solitaire*, arriving from the Angola Coast with 300 blacks, all of whom have had smallpox  
 The *Elizabeth* and the *Victory*, arriving from Cabinde with a fine shipment of Congos acquired at Malimbe  
 The *Notre-Dame du Délivrement*, sailing from Aunis, Gold Coast, with 327 Arada, Aoussa, Dahomet, Ayo blacks  
 The *Dauphin Royal*, arriving from Malimbe with a fine shipment of *Frans Congos*  
 The *Uni*, from the Angola Coast with 300 Africans picked up in two months of trading, ship in the Cap roadstead after a crossing of thirty-six days . . .

The Saint-Domingue press and the slave traders were quite aware of these inaccuracies, and it is for this reason that frequently they adopted the precaution of specifying "arriving from the true Gold Coast." Because of these inaccuracies it would profit little to dig for really accurate data in the body of ship-arrival notices. We will have to settle for data that are informative only in the general sense.

With this in mind we must hope for the earliest possible correction of the information, distorted as it has been by the liberties so lightly taken at Saint-Domingue with respect to geography and the facts about the distribution of the African ethnics. Fortunately we can, in summary fashion, localize this ethnic distribution.

The Senegalese came from Saint-Louis and later, from Gorée, came certain neighboring ethnics—the Bambaras, Quiambas, Sudanese, and the Peuls from Foutah. The Mandingos came out of Gambia. The Aradas were from the true Gold Coast or Slave Coast, stretching from Dahomey to Eastern Nigeria. In slave centers at Judah, Porto-Novo, Ouidah, Abomey, and Allada they thus assembled by language group. The Minas and the Thiambas came from Ghana, the Momos from Gabon, the Cotocolis from Togo, and the Nagos from southwest Nigeria.

The Misérables and the Bouriquis lived on the Malaguetto Coast, now Liberia, and the Mondongos in the Benguele Kingdom, Angola, where Cabinda and Loango were slave trading ports. These latter peoples were improperly classified with the neighboring Congos of Congo Kingdom, situated between Cape Lopes and Cape Nègre, that is, between Gabon and Angola.<sup>11</sup> Based on these considerations, it is now possible to correct errors and irregularities, in any case, to arrive at group classifications consistent with a strict respect for geographic boundaries. It is to this end that we have exerted ourselves in attempting a statistical recapitulation of the slave trade from notices



of slave-ship arrivals in the various ports of Saint-Domingue and from announcements of public sales of cargoes carried by these same slavers.

In spite of reservations we have had to entertain and the corrections that have at times been recommended, we very much doubt that there is to be found a better source of information about the populating of Saint-Domingue toward the end of the colonial period. Does it not accurately bespeak the essential facts about the commerce in slaves? If not the sole basis for investigation, it is in the present state of research the surest, most suggestive and least fragile approach to rediscovering the true and proximate origins of the Haitian community.

Therein lies our interest in the following table. It lays the groundwork for a research team effort that will possibly fill in some of the descriptions and, with help derived from additional sources—inventories of work gangs still come to mind—provide a deeper analysis. The resulting conclusions, we believe, will not in essence be modified.

# Slave Trade to Saint Domingue from 1764 to 1793

1764

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED              | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED             | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED                                |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>Gazette de<br/>Saint-Domingue</i> | 131                | 6681 <sup>12</sup>             | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 10             |
| <i>Avis divers</i>                   |                    |                                | Guinea Coast 9                                     |
| <i>petites Affiches</i>              |                    |                                | <i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 10             |
| <i>Américaines</i>                   |                    |                                | <i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Gorée, Senegal 1         |
|                                      |                    |                                | <i>Other Origins:</i><br>Bought in<br>Martinique 1 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS    |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE |  |

*Guinean Group:* (Guinea Coast and Gold Coast) 19 and 10  
*Angola Coast:* (Congos, True (francs) Congos) of the Bantu Group

*Bantu Group:* In 405 descriptions—these advertisements of runaways had just begun in 1764—already the Congos are the most numerous.<sup>13</sup>

1765

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED     | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED  | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED   |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| <i>Avis divers</i>          | 15                 | Only 2180, while just for the ports of Cap and Port-au-Prince alone the exact total is 11,900 (AA March 12, 1766) | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 6<br>Guinea Coast 6           |
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i> |                    |   | <i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 3<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i> 0 |



| DOMINANT GROUP IN IMPORTATIONS | DOMINANT GROUP IN MARRONAGE   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>Guinean</i>                 | Congos ( <i>Bantu</i> —with about 600 descriptions of runaway slaves) |

## 1766

| NEWSPAPERS CONSULTED        | SHIPS DESCRIBED | SLAVES DECLARED | ORIGINS DECLARED   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i> | 35              | 9602            | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 11<br>Guinea Coast 7<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 15<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Gorée, Senegal 2 |

| DOMINANT GROUP IN IMPORTATIONS | DOMINANT GROUP IN MARRONAGE                                       |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>Guinean:</i> 18             | Congos ( <i>Bantu</i> ) based on some 800 descriptions of Maroons |

## 1767

| NEWSPAPERS CONSULTED        | SHIPS DESCRIBED | SLAVES DECLARED | ORIGINS DECLARED   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i> | 52              | 15293           | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 21<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 27<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i> 0 |

| DOMINANT GROUP IN IMPORTATIONS | DOMINANT GROUP IN MARRONAGE                               |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>Bantu Group</i>             | Congos ( <i>Bantu</i> ) with 1095 descriptions of Maroons |

## 1768

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED                           | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED                                    | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED  |
|---|--------------------|---|--|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>Avis du Cap</i> | 39                 | 8841  | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 11<br>Guinea Coast 6<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 20<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Gorée, Senegal 2 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS                 |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE                        |  |
| <i>Bantu</i>                                      |                    | Congos ( <i>Bantu</i> ) with 1100 Maroon descriptions |  |

## 1769

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED   | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED  | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED  |
|---|--------------------|---|--|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>Avis du Cap</i><br><i>Supplément aux</i><br><i>Affiches Américaines</i> | 37                 | 7950  | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 13<br>Guinea Coast 2<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 21<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Gorée, Senegal 1 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS   |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE                                      |  |
| <i>Bantu</i>  |                    | Congos ( <i>Bantu</i> ) with approximately 1250 Maroon descriptions |  |



## 1770

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED   | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED   | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED   |
|---|--------------------|--|---|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>Supplément aux</i><br><i>Affiches Américaines</i> | 36                 | 8768   | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 1<br>Guinea Coast 18<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 15<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Senegal 2 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS   |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE                                 |   |
| <i>Guinean</i>  |                    | Congos ( <i>Bantu</i> ) with about 1300<br>Maroon descriptions |   |

## 1771

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED                      | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED  | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED   |
|--|--------------------|---|---|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>S.A.A.</i> | 30                 | 6990  | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 9<br>Guinea Coast 1<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 17<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Gambia and Senegal 3 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS            |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE                                |   |
| <i>Bantu</i>                                 |                    | Congos ( <i>Bantu</i> ) with about 950<br>Maroon descriptions |   |

## 1772

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED   | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED             | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED  |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>S.A.A.</i>                      | 39                 | 8821                           | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 11<br>Guinea Coast 5<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 21<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Gambia and Senegal 3 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS                                 |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE |  |
| <i>Congos (Bantu)</i> , approximately<br>1000 Maroon descriptions |                    | —                              |  |

## 1773

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED  | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED   | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED   |
|--|--------------------|--|---|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>S.A.A.</i><br><i>Avis divers</i> | 35                 | 6270   | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 14<br>Guinea Coast 0<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 19<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i> 1<br><i>Other Origins:</i><br>Mozambique 1 <sup>14</sup> |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS                                  |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE   |   |
| <i>Congos (Bantu)</i>  |                    | <i>Congos (Bantu)</i> , with approximately<br>1600 Maroon descriptions |   |



## 1774

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED                      | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED   | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED   |
|--|--------------------|--|---|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>S.A.A.</i> | 35                 | 7629   | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 7<br>Guinea Coast 2<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 24<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Gorée, Senegal 2 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS            |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE   |   |
| <i>Bantu</i>                                 |                    | Congos ( <i>Bantu</i> ) with approximately<br>1000 Maroon descriptions |   |

## 1775

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED                      | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED   | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED  |
|--|--------------------|--|--|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>S.A.A.</i> | 44                 | 7965   | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 19<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 20<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Gorée, Senegal 4 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS            |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE                                 |  |
| <i>Bantu</i> <sup>15</sup>                   |                    | Congos ( <i>Bantu</i> ) with about 1300<br>Maroon descriptions |  |

## 1776

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED                      | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED  |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>S.A.A.</i> | 58                 | 10291              | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 26<br>Guinea Coast 1<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 30<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Gorée, Senegal 1 |

| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE   |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Bantu</i>                      | Congos ( <i>Bantu</i> ) with approximately<br>2100 Maroon descriptions |

## 1777

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED                      | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED   |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>S.A.A.</i> | 50                 | 11387              | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 20<br>Guinea Coast 1<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 22<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Gorée, Senegal 5<br><i>Other Origins:</i> <sup>16</sup><br>Mozambique 2 |

| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE                                     |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Bantu</i>                      | Congos ( <i>Bantu</i> ), approximately 2000<br>Maroon descriptions |



## 1778

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED                                       | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED   | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED   |
|---|--------------------|--|---|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br>S.A.A.<br>in double supplement | 49                 | 10336  | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 28<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Senegal 2<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 17<br>Mozambique 2 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS                             |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE                                       |   |
| <i>Guinean</i> (Gold Coast)                                   |                    | <i>Bantu</i> (Congos) with approximately<br>1700 Maroon descriptions |   |

## 1779

## NEWSPAPERS CONSULTED

*Affiches Américaines* and double Supplement S.A.A.

## SHIPS DESCRIBED

Due to the current insecurity on the high seas because of the Anglo-American war descriptions of slave ships are practically non-existent with the exception of the following three announcements which are insufficient for demonstrating for 1779 the usual percentages of slave origins: March 2, 1779—*La Négresse*, Le Havre, arrived at Cap, February 25 from the Gold Coast. The sale of 89 blacks is announced.

A.A. June 15, 1779—Two English vessels, the *Providence* and the *Herifort*, loaded with slaves taken from prizes captured on rivers in Gambia and Séralione (Sierra Leone)<sup>17</sup> in Africa by the Division commanded by M. de Pontdevis-Gren.

A.A. August 17, 1779—*The Nymphé*, en route from the Africa Coast.

## DOMINANT GROUP IN MARRONAGE

First, *Bantu* (Congos), followed by an unusually large percent of creole or Antillean blacks, then Nagos and Mondongos, for a total of some thirteen hundred descriptions of runaway slaves.

## 1780

## NEWSPAPERS CONSULTED

*Affiches Américaines* and *S.A.A.* Saint-Domingue continued to feel the effects of the war and of a blockade effectively choking off the arrival of slave ships. The *Gazette* continued to publish its "Ship Arrivals" feature. A few convoys under escort were described as "en route from France," "having touched at Martinique," "arriving from the Windward Islands," but not even a single ship departing from the coasts of Africa.

## DOMINANT GROUP IN MARRONAGE

*Bantus*, still the Congos. And among the Maroons always more bossales than creoles. For the year, the number of Maroons announced is about twelve hundred and fifty.

## 1781

## NEWSPAPERS CONSULTED

*Affiches Américaines* and *S.A.A.* (once again in reduced format)

## SHIPS DESCRIBED

Hostilities continue and maritime transport experiences the same difficulties, although a number of merchant vessels under escort out of France arrive at Cap and at Port-au-Prince. Virtual caravans of as many as sixty-nine ships all in the Cap roadstead at the same time.

As for the slave trade it is reduced to the rare ship able to run the blockade, a few neutral ships, perhaps Danish or Spanish, bringing meager contingents of Africans after stopovers in Havana. Among the runaways, newly arrived Africans are seen: Mandingos, Minas, Mozambiques, Nagos, Thiambas—an indication that the trade in blacks is still being carried on, though with difficulty and in numbers inadequate to meeting the demands of the colonists. Traffic is more by contraband than by the regular slave trading, now become so hazardous as to be almost impossible. We find—after the Congos who still dominate in terms of numbers—creolized bossales, no longer considered new blacks, large contingents of creoles from Saint-Domingue or from the neighboring Antilles (Dutch and Spanish blacks, creoles from Curaçao, from Martinique), blacks from Mississippi mixed in with Nagos, Mandingos, Ibos and other bossales habitually runaways. In the last resort, the supply of slaves is assured by means of occasional prizes taken on the high seas.

It may be interesting to reproduce below the notices in the *A.A.* which, better than any commentary provide some idea of the difficulties and the paucity of slave arrivals in the year 1781:



S.A.A. February 27, 1781—"On February 28, 1781, at Cap upon the request of Bernard Lavaud, businessman representing the buyer captains, an auction sale of 202 head of negroes newly arrived from the Gold Coast, belonging to the ship *Le Diamant*, out of London, a prize taken from the enemies of the country by the United States frigate *Saratoga* teamed with two frigates, a private brigantine out of Philadelphia and the Royal brigantine *Le Chat*. In addition, auction sale of *Le Diamant* formerly the slave ship *Duc de Laval* from Rochelle.<sup>18</sup>

A.A. May 29, 1781—the corsair, *Lion*, from Cap, has taken and brought to Cayes a *fenau* (?) with a cargo of blacks shipped from Saint Lucia for Jamaica under Portuguese flag.

S.A.A. July 24, 1781—the vessel *Le Sénac* arrived at Cap from Senegal with a cargo of fifty-six blacks.

217 blacks acquired on the Mozambique Coast brought here by the ship *Le Gange* out of the Orient.

A.A. October 16, 1781—Stanislas Foäche, Hellot and Co. "offers for sale the slave ship *L'Acra* sailing out of the Gold Coast".

A.A. November 20, 1781—The Danish ship *Christiansbourg* "with an exceptional cargo of two-hundred Africans from the Gold Coast," also at the disposition of Foäche, Hellot.

#### LARGEST GROUP AMONG IMPORTS

*Guinean* (Gold Coast) keeping in mind all reservations required by the irregularity of the announcements.

#### LARGEST GROUP AMONG RUNAWAYS

*Bantu* (Congos) based on approximately 1900 descriptions of Maroons.

### 1782

#### NEWSPAPERS CONSULTED

*Affiches Américaines* and S.A.A.

Following is the total listing of announcements relative to the slave trade for the year 1782.

The *Fleurie* from Nantes arriving from Sénégal with one hundred and thirty slaves. The *Chambellan-Schask*, Danish ship with a cargo of four hundred Africans from the Gold Coast addressed to Messrs. Foäche, Hellot and Co., the *Patience* out of St. Thomas, with a great cargo of slaves from the Gold Coast. The *Fancy*, St. Thomas, with a fine shipment of two hundred blacks from the Gold Coast for Lory, Plombard and Co. The vessel *de Enjaam* arriving from Angola with four hundred Africans for Richardson and Bellot.

For sale, a batch of forty to fifty Ibos, at M.M.F. and J. Viard's. The *Adventure* from St. Thomas arrived with a fine cargo of Gold Coast blacks. The

Danish slaver *Gregers-Juel* arriving from the Gold Coast with cargo for Foäche. The *Lion* arrived with a very fine shipment of negroes from the Gold Coast.

Foäche, Morange and Co., give notice they have just received a very fine shipment of two hundred and seventy-one blacks from the Gold Coast. Lory and Plombard announce they are offering for sale 31 head of slaves, of the Arada nation and will have next week fifty-nine additional new blacks, also Aradas.

Foäche, Morange announce the arrival for them of a fine cargo of two hundred and seven negroes from the Gold Coast.

Abeille and Guys offer for sale twelve fine negroes from the Gold Coast and from Angola, and Foäche has fifty head of slaves from the Gold Coast. From Gabinde, the arrival of *La Duchesse de Polignac* of St. Malo with eight hundred blacks from the Angola Coast. Martineau and Blanchaud offer for sale fifty fine negroes. Roux and Rivière have received from the brigantine *Elsinore* of St. Thomas one hundred choice negroes from the Gold Coast.

#### LARGEST GROUP AMONG RUNAWAYS

*Bantu* (Congos) based on approximately one thousand descriptions of Maroons.

#### LARGEST GROUP AMONG THE IMPORTED

*Guinean*.

### 1783

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED   | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED             | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED  |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>S.A.A. and</i><br><i>Supplement</i> | 29                 | 5531                           | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 13<br>Guinea Coast 1 <sup>19</sup><br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 9<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Senegal 3<br><i>Other Origins:</i><br>Porto-Cabello, Cape of<br>Good Hope 3 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS                                     |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE |  |

*Guinean*

*Bantu* (Congos) based on 1386 descriptions of Maroons



## 1784

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED                      | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED  | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED   |
|--|--------------------|---|---|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>S.A.A.</i> | 71                 | 14767 <sup>20</sup>   | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 27<br>Guinea Coast 0<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 37<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Senegal 7 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS            |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE                              |   |
| <i>Bantu</i> (Angola Coast)                  |                    | <i>Bantu</i> (Congos) based on 1489 descriptions of Maroons |   |

## 1785

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED  | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED  | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED  |
|--|--------------------|---|--|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>S.A.A.</i><br>(format of gazette<br>enlarged beginning<br>that year) | 50                 | 12148 <sup>21</sup>   | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 20<br>Guinea Coast 1<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 23<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Senegal 5<br><i>Other Origins:</i><br>Mozambique 1 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS  |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE  |  |
| <i>Bantu</i> (Angola Coast)  |                    | <i>Bantu</i> (Congos) based on approximately 2400 descriptions of Maroons |  |

## 1786

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED  | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED             | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED   |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>S.A.A.</i><br><i>Feuille du Cap</i><br><i>Feuille du</i><br><i>Port-au-Prince</i><br>with supplement | 62                 | 17432 <sup>22</sup>            | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 22<br>Guinea Coast 0<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 27<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Senegal 11<br><i>Other Origins:</i><br>Mozambique 2 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS  |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE |   |

*Bantu* (Angola Coast)*Bantu* (Congos) based on approximately 2600 descriptions of Maroons

## 1787

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED  | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED             | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED   |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i><br><i>S.A.A.</i><br><i>Feuille du Cap</i> and<br><i>Supplement</i><br>twice a week | 87                 | 22726 <sup>23</sup>            | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 44<br>Guinea Coast 0<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 20<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Senegal 14<br><i>Other Origins:</i> 9<br>Mozambique, Coast of<br>Africa, Sierra-Leone,<br>Gabon, Quiola |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS  |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE |   |

*Guinean* (Gold Coast)*Bantu* (Congos), based on approximately 2500 descriptions of Maroons



## 1788

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED  | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED             | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED   |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>Feuille du<br/>Cap-Français</i><br><i>Affiches Américaines</i><br>published on Thurs-<br>days and Saturdays | 36                 | 12048 <sup>24</sup>            | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 16<br>Guinea Coast 0<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 19<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Senegal 1 |
| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS  |                    | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE |   |

*Bantu**Bantu* (Congos), based on approxi-  
mately 2800 descriptions of Maroons

## 1789

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED   | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED  | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED  |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|--|
| <i>Affiches Américaines<br/>et Supplément,</i><br><i>Supplément des A.A.</i><br><i>Feuille du<br/>Cap-Français et S.</i><br><i>Nouvelles diverses</i> | 120                | 33937 <sup>25</sup> | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 48<br>Guinea Coast 2<br><i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 44<br>Mozambique 10<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Senegal 6<br>Gambia 1<br><i>Other Origins:</i><br>No indication 4<br><i>Less Common Origins:</i><br>Isles de Los (at the<br>entrance of Conakry<br>Port, Guinea) 1<br>Cape of Good Hope<br>(Bantu) 1<br>Ile-de-France (east of<br>Madagascar, now Ile<br>Maurice) 2<br>Isle du Prince (in<br>Guinea Gulf) 1<br>A total of 5,<br>including 3 Bantu |

| DOMINANT GROUP IN IMPORTATIONS | DOMINANT GROUP IN MARRONAGE |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Bantu</i>                   | —                           |

## 1790

| NEWSPAPERS CONSULTED        | SHIPS DESCRIBED | SLAVES DECLARED     | ORIGINS DECLARED        |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i> | 170             | 46471 <sup>26</sup> | <i>Guinean Group:</i>   |
| <i>Feuille du</i>           |                 |                     | Gold Coast 68           |
| <i>Cap-Français</i>         |                 |                     | <i>Sudanese Group:</i>  |
| <i>Supplément aux</i>       |                 |                     | Senegal 3               |
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i> |                 |                     | <i>Bantu Group:</i>     |
| <i>Journal Général de</i>   |                 |                     | Angola Coast 68         |
| <i>Saint-Domingue</i>       |                 |                     | Mozambique 26           |
| (October to December)       |                 |                     | <i>Other Origins: 5</i> |
|                             |                 |                     | no indication 3         |
|                             |                 |                     | Ile-de-France 2         |

| DOMINANT GROUP IN IMPORTATIONS        | DOMINANT GROUP IN MARRONAGE  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Bantu</i> (Congos and Mozambiques) | <i>Bantu</i> (Congos, followed closely by Mozambiques) based on approximately 3500 descriptions of Maroons |



1791

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED  | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED | SLAVES<br>DECLARED | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED   |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| <i>Gazette de<br/>Saint-Domingue<br/>politique, civile,<br/>économique et<br/>littéraire</i> | 58                 | 9449               | <i>Guinean Group:</i><br>Gold Coast 22<br>Guinea, Ile de Los 1<br><i>Sudanese Group:</i><br>Senegal 2 |
| <i>Affiches Américaines<br/>(Wednesdays and<br/>Saturdays, plus one<br/>Supplément)</i>      |                    |                    | <i>Bantu Group:</i><br>Angola Coast 24<br>Mozambique 3  |
| <i>Journal Général de<br/>Saint-Domingue<br/>(January to March)</i>                          |                    |                    | <i>Other Origins:</i><br>Coast of Africa 2<br>Ile-de-France 1<br>No indication 3                      |
| <i>Courrier de<br/>Saint-Domingue</i>  |                    |                    |   |
| <i>Courrier National de<br/>Saint-Domingue</i>   |                    |                    |   |
| <i>Journal du<br/>Port-au-Prince</i>   |                    |                    |   |
| <i>Assemblée Coloniale<br/>de la Partie Française</i>  |                    |                    |   |

| DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>IMPORTATIONS | DOMINANT GROUP IN<br>MARRONAGE   |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Bantu</i>                      | <i>Bantu</i> (Congos followed by numerous<br>Mozambiques) based on approxi-<br>mately 4600 descriptions of Maroons |

## 1792 and 1793

| NEWSPAPERS<br>CONSULTED   | SHIPS<br>DESCRIBED  | SLAVES<br>DECLARED | ORIGINS<br>DECLARED |
|---|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Journal politique de<br/>Saint-Domingue</i><br>(edited by a member<br>of the colonial<br>Assembly) | The regular<br>slave trade<br>nears an end<br>amid serious<br>convulsions | —                  | —                   |
| <i>Affiches Américaines</i>   | that shake  |                    |                     |
| <i>Journal des Révolutions<br/>de la Partie<br/>Française de<br/>Saint-Domingue</i>                   | Saint-<br>Domingue<br>and the<br>increasingly                             |                    |                     |
| <i>Moniteur de la Partie<br/>Française Observateur<br/>de Saint-Domingue</i><br>daily and Supplément  | fervid activity<br>of the<br>abolitionists.                               |                    |                     |
| <i>L'Observateur colonial</i>   |   |                    |                     |
| <i>La Gazette des Cayes</i> <sup>27</sup>   |   |                    |                     |

Announcements of slave-ship arrivals are more and more rare, as if the new climate of opinion forbade according prominent notice to this increasingly contested traffic. Nevertheless, some well-known slave ships arrive at and leave from Cap or Port-au-Prince. Very often, in giving the number of days for the crossing the press reveals that the ships are slavers, but without so specifying and without declaring either the origin of the vessels or the importance of their cargoes. Furthermore, there are many creoles from Martinique and Charleston or from Marie Galante (this suggests a supply in countries nearby) in marronage as there are new blacks often not yet branded, not able to speak French—Congos, Mozambiques, Nagos, Senegal-ese, Mandingos, Ibos. This line of information confirms that in 1792 and even up to the end of March 1793 the slave trade was continuing.

It would have been particularly interesting to get a close look at the status of the slave trade in its last manifestations. Unfortunately, however, the press of these last years is limited to these brief announcements:

The *Serapis* arriving from Mozambique. A shipment of 282 blacks from the Gold Coast. Three others from the Gold Coast. Nine shipments from the Angola Coast. The number of slaves described—the press being generally mute on the composition of shipments—does not exceed two thousand for the year 1792. In 1793 the *Moniteur Général* a daily newspaper with a supplement announces only:

January 14, 1793—three newly arrived Congos escaped from aboard the *General Washington*.



February 20, 1793—Sale of bossales from Sénégal acquired from a ship from Havana.

March 22, 1793—*The Nouvelle Société* from Nantes arrived from the Zaïre River, Angola Coast, with an excellent cargo of 331 blacks for delivery to Demonhaison Lelong and Co., who will open their sale on the twenty-fifth, next current.

March 25, 1793—*The Bonne Henriette* of Bordeaux with a superb cargo of 378 blacks from the Angola Coast.

March 27, 1793—the *Postillon* of St. Malo sailing from Senegal destined for Foäche, Morange, Hardivillier.

This is the last announcement in the press which, we flatter ourselves, we have carefully sifted, always conscious of the extent of our temerity and our possible omissions in such an undertaking which, instead of being the task of a single researcher, ought rather to have been a task for a team of researchers. The day will arrive perhaps when our country will have come to appreciate the value of basic research, indispensable for any proper approach to the origins and elements of our glorious history.

So far as announcements are concerned, the regular slave trade<sup>28</sup> ends with this twenty-seventh of March 1793. Curiously enough, the trade comes to an end with the uprooting of the very people, the Senegalese,<sup>29</sup> with which operations had begun a century and a half earlier. And it is the house of Stanislaus Foäche—the most important in the slave trade at Saint-Domingue—which had the dubious privilege of assuming the responsibility for this last crime barely noted by the colonial gazettes.

*Dominant group in importations:* Bantu (Congos and Mozambiques) followed by blacks from the Gold Coast and from Senegal.

*Dominant group among runaways:* The Saint-Domingue press has grown considerably and comprises no less than six gazettes in 1792, 1793. But, as with arrivals of slave ships, it very carefully abstains from denouncing marronage. Instead, with great discretion it refers to "strayed" or lost blacks. Even the colonial authority hardly cares to fulfill its legal obligation to publish the list of runaway slaves in jail or up for sale as unclaimed. We will comment later on this silence, the result of tacit agreement between the colonials and the colonial authorities, all the while marronage becomes the resort of increasingly menacing groups and continues in this aggressive form until the general Proclamation of Liberty in August of 1793.

The *Moniteur Général* published only twenty announcements of slave flight for the year 1792, and thirty in 1793. The same daily publishes many more announcements of "citizens" advising that they have taken steps "to free certain slaves in recompense for their good services." The *Observateur Colonial* and the *Gazette des Cayes* between them describe exactly fifty-eight Maroons, of whom the greatest number are simply "strays," thus inducing the proprietor owners to request that "those who have given them hospitality" return them. These meagre details about the Maroons make unfeasible

any conclusion about "nations" numerically dominant among runaways in 1792, 1793. With this necessary reservation we note that for these years the Congos appear still to be the most numerous in marronage and that the percent of creole blacks in flight is still even then less than the percent of the bossales, blacks newly arrived from Africa, or creole blacks from neighboring islands.

The conclusions drawn from this tabulation of the slave trade to Saint-Domingue lead to three major claims: 1) The Sudanese group (Sénégal, Gambia), while decreasing steadily in number, is still represented by importations, especially from Gorée; 2) The Guinean group (Guinea Coast and Gold Coast) remains a sizeable reservoir for stocking Saint-Domingue. The Gold Coast greatly outstrips the Guinea Coast and even dominates the importations of Angolans, Congos, Francs-Congos, and of Mozambiques in the Bantu group during the several years analyzed. Unquestionably, the Bantu group (Congos, Angolas, Mozambiques) heads the list of importations and lists strongly suggestive of marronage as well as lists of arrivals and sales of slave shipments. The most recent ancestors of the Haitian community at the time of this inquiry would be for the most part slaves of the Bantu group brought in to reinforce, and subsequently to dominate the importations of blacks from the Guinean group and the declining contributions of the Sudanese group. Such are our original roots.

Differentially yet indelibly stamped we wear the seal of these three groups from Mother Africa and, with both moral and physical characteristics dominating this strangest of brews, we bear the weight of a heritage fashioned by Sudanese, Guineans, and Bantus. Through a fidelity to the deep anguish of the uprooted or to the burning exaltation of hope and optimism of their races they came in long lines to rendezvous with a troubled destiny and in slow penetration to inseminate the quivering new land as though it were some carnal, virginal enclosure.

Seduced by borrowed cultures and such a diversity of inputs, link by link in long relays through days of sweat and blood they fashioned an entirely new race, woven on a Bantu spinning wheel from French threads, drawn, broken, sewn and resewn, under the sun of a new human adventure. And never did the umbilical skein, stretched so far across the seas since the beginning of the slave trade, become unraveled, or severed.

To these contributions from Africa there must of course be added that of the creole slaves, those born in the colony, mostly dark-skinned resultants of the most current slave interrelationships who were in the smallest percent because of chance crossing with whites, griffes, mulattoes, the remaining Indians, the *métis* or *sang mêlés* [mixed bloods] with their dizzying gamut of shades and colorations ranging from griffe to marabout, from mulatto to quadroon.\*

It was the fancy of Moreau de Saint-Méry to group the myriad fractions



of these mixtures into "thirteen distinct classifications on the basis of skin color" with twelve ways to produce a mulatto, a melange producing a most robust constitution, one most suitable to the Saint-Domingue climate, six combinations of *métis* (in Saint-Domingue the term was *métif*, *métive*),<sup>30</sup> five combinations of mamelukes, five for griffes, three for sacatras, four for quadroons, five for marabouts. These were in addition to several small Indian groups, aborigines or Antillean Caribs, East Indians and even West Indians brought in from Louisiana and Canada by English slavers who diffused them among the population after having witnessed the extraordinary prodigality in house servants among some of the rich colonials.<sup>31</sup>

In an anthropological note Stenio Vincent, disdaining these scholarly breakdowns, this color graph, brings to mind that it was the white master who in secret passing fancy, in the debasement of tropical ruts far from the big house impregnated the black woman or the copper-skinned Indian. Or else it was the black man who joined the shivering of his scarred flesh with the voluptuous quivering of his companion in misery thus accomplishing in the uncertain repose of warm perfumed nights the mysterious rite of love universal. . . .<sup>32</sup>

The descriptions complete the number of these dark-skinned and mulatto creoles with the scarcely negligible contributions during certain periods—for example during the long American war which hampered the French slave trade—of slaves creolized or born in the neighboring Antilles, Curaçao, Jamaica and Aruba.<sup>33</sup> Far from being insignificant, their proportion reveals the contraband which had been carried on and which was still in vogue in Saint-Domingue. Was it not expedient for the administration to close its eyes to the illicit entry of Africans indispensable to cultivation, especially in the South where the scarcity of labor continued to distress the colonists and to delay the development of the economy? Many of these Antillean creole or creolized slaves were seen in Port-au-Prince or in Cap, indeed even in the small parishes of the West and the North. Rarely were these contraband blacks ever seized. Atypically, seven slaves belonging to Ledan of Jérémie were seized. Voluntarily or encouraged by bribes the colonial authorities feign ignorance of the existence of this traffic.

Finally, to complete the ethnic picture, there remained a small number of aborigines, Indians, with a penchant for marronage, having the advantage of color which permitted them to declare themselves free men. Thus, they were able without difficulty to move about the fringes of the major cities. These Indians were often mixed with blacks, including mulattoes. Both mulatto Indians and Indian griffes were noted in advertisements. Also noted in Saint-Domingue were "Antillean Caribs" or "savages from Mississippi." The original race now existed only in its last surviving specimens.<sup>34</sup> The same was true for those who came from the neighboring isles where due to miscegenation, the inability to withstand hard labor, and native degeneration this people was about to disappear.

In the slave world, the Africans whether newly arrived or creolized, were by far the most numerous and the most active in the fray or the "clandestine advance of the blood (*cheminement du sang*). For this reason their contribution was more real, more continuous. The contribution of the creole blacks was doubtless more limited because of their smaller numbers towards the end of colonization; it was, nevertheless, a particularly active, even critical one.<sup>35</sup>

In fact, it is probable that we are in great number indebted to the creole Africans, skilled workers, and house-servants, for the impressions of the strengths and defects resulting from assimilation with colonial life, from the more direct contact with white masters, from a more accessible approach to European habits and manners for the copying of which, even to the point of aping, they were criticized. Consequently, we also owe to them the long-established and continued practice of adopting and spreading in the black world the influences and traces visible in so many ways—other than the purely physical results of crossbreeding—of the temperament of those regions of France which had the most contact with Saint-Domingue: people from Brittany, Normandy, Angevin, Poitevin, Limousin, Angoulême, Gascony. . . .<sup>36</sup>

It has been said that we have adopted all the weaknesses of the French and none of their good qualities. A completely French facetiousness. On the contrary, it was slavery that gave its victims, long engaged in the process of defense, the art of dissembling and deception.

Over the long years these were useful weapons against the cruel derision of the pitiless colonists, since they would be the ultimate recourse, the supreme skill in the face of exactions which to the detriment of the proletariat and the peasantry would, alas, be continued after Independence by new dark and light-skinned settlers. The Haitian élite themselves may have conserved as heritage certain resultants of the colonial past. Foremost among these would be a "withering (*dessèchant*) particularism" born in the panic of headlong flight, the mind set of the authoritarian and cruel slave driver, apprehensiveness, and a careful reserve manifested in social and political relations. Yes, and enviousness that can rise to the level of a disconcerting, inexplicable hatred of the achiever, whether the achievement be simply an honest success in business or the modest success of a writer.



## Branding

IN SAINT-DOMINGUE slaves were branded in much the same way as animals. By way of illustration, here are brands used on horses, asses and mules followed by slave brands:

A roan-colored mare branded F.L., the letters interlaced and her young mule of eighteen months not branded. A brown she-ass, blind, with illegible brand; chestnut English horse branded L.B. and below that brand St. M. (Saint-Marc) on the left thigh; a young castrated mule apparently not branded, with a chest wound, found at Acul and brought to the jail; a bay ass with split ears at the ends and, imposed on an old brand, the letters B.R.B. repeated upside down on both thighs.

Examples of slave brands: A Congo male branded I.H.S. with a cross over *H*. belongs to the Jesuits; Désirée, a Nago, branded Etienne Chaviteau; two new blacks from the Gold Coast, not branded; Michau, a Congo, brand illegible; François, a creole, branded Jumel on his right chest and on the left, Fourcade, belongs to M. Jumel of Saint-Marc; Jacques, a creole with the M. Fleury brand on his right chest and on the left, Prouvo; Jolicoeur, a Thiamba, with the brand St And on his right arm, the last two letters entwined, and on both sides of the chest LeBlanc Baradares upside down and hard to make out; François Martin, Spanish mulatto stamped Hudicourt on his right breast, property of Mr. Hudicourt of Port-au-Prince; Sophie, an Arada apparently not branded, previously belonging to one Babiche, a free black woman; Jean-Baptiste, a Mondongo, the Martin brand on his right chest and on the left, Fauque, and below, Léogâne.

Baptiste, an Arada branded Bailly St. Marc.

Gérard, a Bambara, with the Wals brand on his stomach.

Michaud, Congo, has a stomach brand.

Alexis, Congo, branded L.C.L.

Listin, creole, branded L.C.

Vincent, creole, Maniac brand on the right chest, S.N.E. upside down on the left.

Jean Baptiste, Congo, Dulac brand on the right chest and Dalcour on the left.

Jacques, Jamaica creole, branded L. Pasquier.

Pierre, a Cotocoli, branded L.A. and some illegible letters on the right breast, and below that Au Cap, Fiess on the left breast and St. M. below it.

François, Congo, M.L. Tar brand on his right chest, the letters all intertwined, property of one Pierre, free black residing in la Coupe.

Pierre, creole, with the brand Aujar Au Cap in horseshoe design on both breasts.

A new slave woman, no owner's brand, but has the ship's brand L.J. on her right buttock.

Jasmin, Congo, three brands on his chest.

Baptiste, a griffe from Martinique, bears the brand of the King of Spain on his right shoulder.

Pierre, an escapee from jail, branded Pago on both sides of the chest, and most recently, Gavary.

A new Negro, Nago, has the ship's brand CCC on his right chest and on his left chest C. Harran.

Mercure, Congo with the Estèves brand and scarred at the hands of the executioner, belongs to Mister Estèves, Seneschal at Cap.

A slave branded on the chest D.P. followed by an ivy leaf.

A Congo, Paul, no brand other than several fleurs-de-lys.

A Maroon carrying no brand except for a burn from the upper thigh to heel.

Louis, a creole Negro has a GDV brand on his right chest and Feret Mtre on the left.

At Cap a slave branded Maçon "with both ears cut off."

Jean-Phillipe, a Mina, branded Chovet and claiming to belong to M. Déjean, businessman from Plaine.

A new Negro woman bearing on her left breast the brand IRC and a clover-leaf.

Titus, a Congo branded Portal.

Dianne, a Mesurade, branded P.L. intertwined with a heart.

Clearly, there was no set way of branding. Usually brands were applied on the right or left breast of both sexes, sometimes on both. Sometimes they carried the full name of the owner or of the plantation. Occasionally brands included the full name of the owner or the plantation, the address spelled out or abbreviated, for example, St.M. for Saint-Marc; P.A.P. for Port-au-Prince; P.P.X. for Port-de-Paix, and so forth.<sup>37</sup> When slaves were acquired by new masters their brands were changed. Attempts would be made, not always successfully, to invalidate the old brand by defacing it.

Excessive branding resulted in obliteration. The chests of certain slaves were covered with intersecting brands in which the letters were so intertwined as to make the brand illegible. Most brands were stamped in a straight line, some in horseshoe design or in reversed letters. On rare occasions a master taken by whim would brand on the arm, the shoulders or in the middle of the chest, or would embellish the brand with figurative signs such as crosses or stars.

Sometimes slaves bore no brands. It has been claimed that this was a privilege enjoyed by creole slaves. Proud of this distinction, they would feel humiliated and consider themselves subjected to the worst of punishments if



because of marronage the master were to brand them. Was this privilege, reserved for the creole born, in such general practice as to become the rule? Runaway slave notices shed doubt on such a claim. Certainly we note fewer creole than newly creolized slaves branded, but in contrast we observe that many new arrivals and even some creolized slaves—creolized in the sense of having passed a year in the colony, bore no brand. These were slaves of every origin—Bambaras, Mondongos, Mozambiques, Hausas, Congos, Nagos, Minas, Mandingos, Ibos, Aradas, among others.

The initials of the owners were used, as, for example, L.S., B.D., M.V., and so on. As this could often lead to confusion, the entire name was more often used in the brand when the given name, the address, or even the status of the master was not included: Marie Catherine Heylidor, young Castor, Widow Moullet, Marie-Elisabeth, creole of Dandon; Saint-Vallée Haut-Moustique, M.L., free mulatto.

More than others, freedmen tended to display their qualifications and titles on the chests of their slaves. Some masters made use of a double, even a triple brand. We see slaves thus branded in 1764 and in 1791. The mulatto Louis Durocher was branded four times by his masters, M. Daufor of Cap.

All this indicates a great variety of practices preferred by owners, including fantasies. We have found records of slaves with face brands:

"A new negro, Congo, age twenty-two, five feet one inch tall, bearing on his stomach the marks of his country and on his face the brand H.C."<sup>38</sup>

"Alexander Louis, property of M. Volant of Port-au-Prince, with the brand 'Volant' on both sides of the breast and on the cheeks"; a Mozambique branded Jacques and in addition wearing at the neck "a piece of wood inscribed Lespérance as a label."<sup>39</sup>

We also discovered the peculiar brand that Caradeux, the Cruel, of Plaine du Cul-de-Sac had invented for punishing runaway slaves: "A runaway slave wearing on the left of his chest and on his shoulder the brand 'I am a maroon' and below that, 'Caradeux.'"<sup>40</sup>

The following instructions are included in a regulation of 9 May 1789, relative to the southern region of Saint-Domingue.

"Captains of foreign vessels shall be required to have branded with the three letters J.P.S. every negro in their shipment, within ten days of arrival in the warehousing port."<sup>41</sup>

The General Assembly of the French Port of Saint-Domingue chose to brand Maroons with the letter R.

On the motion proposing that brigands who lay down their arms and to whom it might be considered fitting to grant their lives or on whom judgment should be suspended, are to be branded with hot iron such that they will always be recognized among those who have in no wise participated in revolt and who shall have remained faithful to their masters. Whereas it would be most ill-advised to have these negroes return to the plantations of their masters to mingle with those who have taken no part in the revolt [The Assembly]

has decreed and does now decree that negroes who have laid down their arms shall not suffer immediate death and shall be marked on the cheek with a hot iron bearing the letter *R*<sup>42</sup> before being returned to the plantations of their masters.

Almost on the very eve of the General Proclamation of Liberty—barely four months before—Sonthonax and Polvérel would try to use the brand to combat marronage. The fugitive slave was to be stamped with the letter *M* signifying *Maroon* on the left shoulder—an abbreviation of the Caradeux extravagance. Following, in excellent Creole\* of the time, are the penalties projected for fugitive slaves by the commissioners, who, hemmed in by events, subsequently honored themselves by abolishing slavery. "Any slave who shall remain a fugitive for more than one month . . . when caught shall have his ear cut off and shall have the letter *M* marked on his shoulder." [The recidivist] . . . "shall have his hamstrings cut and *M* marked on his left shoulder."

"Armed maroons shall be killed."<sup>43</sup> (" . . . io va touyé io")

It should be said in passing that Sonthonax personally in 1797 would distribute thirty thousand guns to these same blacks "as a safeguard of their liberty." The commissioners had not exhausted their opportunism. They sought support now from the whites, now from the freedmen, again from the slaves. It is not surprising to note that slyly they would remind the Africans in that same so curious proclamation that the troublemakers "*io pas gagné parens dans Guinée*" (will never again see their people in Africa).

We know from information on captured Maroons from the English colonies, that branding on the shoulder was the general practice. Many of the slaves from Martinique were not branded. Those from the eastern part of the island sometimes bore on the right shoulder brands with the arms of the King of Spain. Rarely did Saint-Domingue colonists brand slaves on the stomach or shoulder. In contrast, slave-ship branding—the first the slave would receive—was sometimes applied to the shoulder, at times on the buttocks or on the arm, rarely on the breasts, and rarer still in interlacing letters. The care exercised by slave merchants not to unduly damage their "merchandise" with too-visible branding scars prior to offering slaves to the colonists is understandable. The slave trader preferred to leave to the eventual buyers an unmarked, shining breast for their personal brands. For the same reason, ships' brands were reduced to simple initials, L.R. for *La Rosalie*, arrived with Africans from Gold Coast, or L.C., *Le Captif*, from Nantes, arriving from Gorée with a fine cargo of Senegalese. . . .

It should now be noted that the brand was applied with a hot iron. According to Father Labat, the brand was first heated red hot, then applied to male or female breasts smeared beforehand with tallow or grease; "the flesh immediately swells, and, when the effect of the burn has passed, the



mark remains impressed on the skin with no possibility of its ever being effaced.”<sup>44</sup>

Such was the pain caused by the searing brand, owners feared applying it to slave women in advanced pregnancy.<sup>45</sup> There were frequent accidents. They repeatedly resulted in so-called *brules*—brands which left confusing, illegible letters on the “pimpled” flesh. Some slaves had two, even three “burnt brands” indicating a succession of clumsy operations. At different periods, especially in 1785, merchants at Cap or Port-au-Prince tried to popularize “an ink for branding slaves which brands very well without bad aftereffects.” We find no clear indication of the adoption of this new process.<sup>46</sup> On the contrary, slaves resorting to marronage did not hesitate to mutilate by fire their brands, making them unrecognizable and thus thwarting any identification, as follows:

“A black named Francis branded P.P. and Pardon St. Marc, has worked over his brands so as to make them unrecognizable, said black is customarily armed with a machete and a brace of pistols, claims to be free.” Of another Maroon it was said that his brands “may be somewhat worn out or else he may try to destroy them.” A common method for making the brands illegible was to rub them with acajou nuts. At parrying in self-defense the slave was an inventive genius.<sup>47</sup>

The practice of hot branding was continued. It had the advantage of long experience. Besides, no colonist had ever bothered to discover whether or not the hot iron harmed the slave. All of them branded their slaves. The priests and the religious communities sometimes added to the initials of the congregations the symbol of the Cross of Christ. With not the slightest scruple Father Brard could publish the following announcement in the *S.A.A.*:

Father Brard, ordained Apostolic Missionary of the Capucin Order by Papal Bulls, Letters patent of the King and Decrees of the Parliament at Paris and of the Conseil Supérieur of Port-au-Prince, formerly parish priest at Cap Dame-Marie having for business reasons arranged his departure for Versailles on the twelfth of this month has for sale two handsome young blacks branded with his name. . . .

Belatedly one is revolted by such lack of humaneness on the part of a disciple of the gentle Nazarene who taught the world the meaning of Love and Brotherhood. But this is to forget that the setting is Saint-Domingue, a land where as they fed upon the slaves and ground the bones, the colonials ignored even the pause for digestion observed by wild beasts. . . .

## National Markings

HISTORIANS HAVE UNANIMOUSLY condemned the colonists for branding human beings<sup>49</sup> as though they were cattle and with this stamp of humiliation merging them with the horse, the ox, and the mule. The sentiment is praiseworthy. But for the slave the wearing of a brand was not a novelty. What was humiliating was that the purpose of the brand was to symbolize his subjection to slavery in a distant land and not, as traditional in Africa, to mark his relationship to a people or even to a master of his own ethnic group of which he wore the distinctive marking. The difference is considerable. In general, the African brand, apart from its tribal character, did not symbolize servitude. Its marks were far removed from any such meaning. They were, rather, national markings, *marques du pays* as they were called.<sup>50</sup>

With scarcely an exception, every bossale, every new slave, wore these marks. They were carved on the temples, the length of the face or on the cheeks, on the front of the body, between the eyebrows and on the chest. The diversity of locations chosen for the markings, incisions, scars, or tattoos is noted in the descriptions. There was no fixed rule about this. The practice varied from one people to another and the jumbled assembling of the captives in *baracoons* while they waited for the slave ships, their being mixed in the loading of these ships and sold as fast as they arrived in the colonies make improbable any fruitful inquiry into the differing marks of each nation. On this subject descriptions indicate only the infinite variety and placement of these marks, betraying the same inability as do even those who have long lived in present-day Africa to reliably distinguish tribal and ethnic relationships by means of these markings.

Further on we will observe special signs peculiar to certain "nations," which depended on the same tribal affiliations: male or female with an ear or upper lip pierced for a ring, or holes in the cheek, nose or lip. The *Affiches* gives as a singular example the case of a Congo woman, Rose, who had "no national marks on her face." Usually, Congo women had "two or three little lumps near the temple." The men were less frequently marked. Calvary women wore "long markings from temple to neck." For Arada women, the descriptions note "Arada marks on each temple" and, for Mozambiques, "marks on the forehead and close to the temple."

Some markings must also have been adapted to certain popular beliefs.



In the Haitian countryside there still exists the custom of disfiguring an infant born particularly handsome and healthy by making incisions on the child's face, thus to protect him against the spell of evil spirits, that is, to prevent his being singled out for an unhappy fate (*maldioc*)\* by the envious and the jealous. Some of the following markings especially arouse the curiosity. For example, on 1 November 1783, a new Negro "with marks of his country on his face, and on the right side of his chest the form of a *D*." On 3 December 1783 we find "a black with a sign representing a racket on his right chest," and on 6 December 1783 a new Negro "with a kind of crown on the right side of the head." It is not unreasonable to consider that in Africa these particular signs are indications of noble families, that we are in the presence of captives of sound stock—leaders, warriors, nobles, princes or high nobility of organized communities taken in some merciless manhunt and shipped out or else simply sold following a tribal war. Saint-Méry records a frequent Saint-Domingue scene:

Recognizing by these markings members of the nobility of their homeland, Mina negroes prostrate themselves at their feet to render homage the which is in such contrast with the state of servitude to which these princes have been reduced in the colony as to offer a rather striking picture of the uncertainties of human grandeur.<sup>61</sup>

Many of the "marks" found here and there in sifting through the Saint-Domingue press should be linked with a similar observation. For example, in 1764, mention was made of a new Negro from the Maroons of Cap and the surrounding area "with two marks shaped like a heart on his stomach"; in 1783 two Congos "with a mark in the form of an *O*," a new Negro "with a national marking resembling a chain extending from the left shoulder to the stomach," a slave "with national marks on his temples, behind the neck and on his stomach forming a large cross."<sup>62</sup> In other years we find descriptions such as the following:

Three Congos "with national marks in the form of a square on the face." . . . A Maroon displaying on his lower abdomen something like "a square with nailheads." . . . Jean-Phillipe, Congo, "has pointed teeth and marks on his breasts in the shape of a cross." . . . A Mossombi, Paul, with marks festooned on his face. . . . A new Negro with marks forming two broad columns on his lower abdomen; another with national markings in the form of a St. Andrew's cross—his name is Bouquart. . . . A female belonging to Mme. Chatelin of Artibonite marked with three points on the face. Two new Negroes, Congos, with a horseshoe brand and with a star on the left side of the chest and native marks in the form of little bunches of flowers. . . . A newly arrived Congo with a lizard on the right of his chest; another with a marking in the form of a chalice; an Ibo with a mark like a snail. . . . Two

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\*A voodoo word meaning "bad spell."

Mondongo Negroes "with very pointed black teeth, stomach scarred in the fashion of their nation, a sort of crescent on the arm, both wearing écu-colored pants." These Africans are out of the vessel *Jeune Auguste* and belong to Trouillot and Company, bakers, Fronts-Forts Street, Port-au-Prince.<sup>53</sup>



## Special Characteristics

UNDER THIS HEADING will be grouped those characteristics pertaining to skin color, hair, dentition, and bearing, as given in Maroon descriptions. Without doubt individual examples and exceptional cases of these special characteristics play a part in providing certain contradictions to the unique notes left by Moreau de Saint-Méry. Nevertheless these notes allow us to attempt a re-creation of the physical type of these ancestors of the Haitian community.

In terms of shades of skin color the average seemed to be somewhere between the ebony-black Senegalese, or Bambaras, and the lighter-skinned Poules, Poulards, or Peuls. The true type of Saint-Domingue slave was found in the areas of the Gold Coast and the Congo and Angola kingdoms. Theirs was not the ebony black so much in demand, and considered a sign of beauty by the slavers and slaves alike,<sup>54</sup> nor the reddish tint, both found in great numbers. It was rather a skin color "not extremely black" when compared with the jet black of certain African ethnics, nor "reddish" enough to approximate, however slightly, that of the Peuls or Foulahs, except when accompanied by their refinement of features. The latter had crossbred in a long-distant past, but were scarcely numerous in Saint-Domingue.<sup>55</sup> We would be better oriented if before examining the bits of information provided by the descriptions we were to note Saint-Méry's observations. The Senegalese, he noted, were ebony colored, tall, slender, and well built, with a long nose "somewhat like that of the whites" and hair a bit less woolly than that of most of the other slaves. The Yoloofs were even darker and the Bambaras taller with an awkward, timid manner. The Quiambas were much the same.

The Mandingos were of a lighter complexion. Gold Coast slaves "do not have a really black skin but rather a yellowish tint that could cause many of them to be considered mulattoes. They are well built, bright-eyed with small ears, thick eyebrows, a flat and slightly turned up nose, a rather large mouth, white teeth, shiny skin and hair long enough for plaiting." This was how he depicted Caplaous, Minas, Socos, Fantins, Sossos, Aradas and Dahomeys, Ibos and Nagos.

Finally, among the many ethnic groups in Saint-Domingue towards the end of colonization, those from the Congo and from the kingdom of Angola had a skin color between that of the Senegalese and the Gold Coast Africans. They were of moderate height and lively countenance. The Mozambiques

from East Africa with a few samplings from Madagascar or Maurice were "not extremely dark . . . taller than Congos and Angolans, with exceptionally long arms and a weak constitution."

As for the women brought into the colony, the Poulards were, in the perfection of their symmetry "a masterpiece of creation." Arada women were heavy in the hips and thighs, practiced excision as did Sossos and Poulards, and found it hard to learn French. Calvary women had disproportionately large bosoms, however for all that were yet very beautiful. The palm went to the Congo women, impassioned dancers and singers with their vivacious faces, their pleasure-seeking and fondness for adornments, their delight in love affairs.<sup>56</sup>

Saint-Méry rounded off his recollection by describing the men as being all polygamous, libertine, jealous, usually sober, almost beardless, not turning gray until very old. The women, he noted, had an incorrigible penchant for black men, gave themselves dissolutely and without pleasure to white men, and accepted sharing their husbands with other women commonly referred to as "sailors' wives." This African custom, it can be said in passing, has been perpetuated among us, encouraged by polygamy with an economic basis, giving to a wealthy peasant the privilege of having on each of his plots of land a little mama (mother of his children). As for the creole Africans, yet to be discussed, except for the very few Moorish slaves and the rare albinos, victims of apigmentation at birth,<sup>57</sup> Saint-Méry grants them "intelligence, graceful lithe bodies and attractive faces."

Let us now examine the information provided by the descriptions, the main features of which I have outlined from abundant examples. First, concerning variety in skin colors, advertisements in the Saint-Domingue press often take into consideration the colonial custom of describing that color as more or less black. Skin color was examined, as it were, under a microscope, representing a truly difficult feat and revealing an almost hidden obsession of the colonial mentality: they were determined to find among the slaves gradations of color that were almost imperceptible. Another quirk in the colonial mentality was the attribution of a "goat odor" to blacks and mulattoes, a reputed defect in slaves from Angola.<sup>58</sup>

As regards this practice of coloring in comparative shades of black after the colonial manner, it has not been possible to determine at first glance the meaning of descriptions of Maroons as "red" Negroes. The *Affiches Américaines* and other Saint-Domingue journals provide a long list of Maroons described as "red of skin," "having a rather red skin," "very red," "reddish negress," "slightly reddish." We would further be confused by such contradictory statements as the following:

"Cato, a Congo negress with a face as red as a griffonne" on the one hand, and, on the other, "Silvain, mulatto slave, with such a dark skin he is more likely to be taken for a griffe than for a mulatto, usually wears a head scarf over short, curly hair."



"Red as a griffonne" or "dark as a griffonne" are not contradictions. These designations are intended to describe a female as light-skinned as a griffonne and a mulatto as dark as a griffe.

In short, the explanation would be that a "red negro" is one who is not very black. It is, besides, the sense that has remained attached to this designation. Such is the historical explanation of this word passed down directly from the colonial period and so current in Haitian speech. What is confusing is to see this characteristic "red Negro," which designated the Guinean group and especially slaves from the Gold Coast, used to indicate Senegalese as well as Congos and Angolas. This overlapping of characteristics will also be observed for many other traits, all of which mark as rather useless the attempts at microscopical skin examinations to which the colonists wished to submit the slaves of Saint-Domingue.

Thus, to be found among the Maroons were:

Rosalie, a reddish Mandingo . . . Charles, Congo, red of skin . . . L'Eveillé, Mondongo, red of skin . . . A new Negro, heavily built with red skin . . . Lafleur, Ibo, red skin . . . Jean, a creole with red skin . . . Angélique, Nago woman, very red . . . Arcinte, Nago woman, very red . . . Louis Bordin, very red creole . . . a Nago male, red skin . . . another Nago with reddish skin . . . Simon, a Senegalese with reddish skin . . . a very red mulatto Indian . . . an Ibo with red skin . . . Petit-Pierre, Congo has red face. . .

Thus it appears that all the ethnic groups, Sudanese as well as Bantu and Guineans, which assured the populating of the colony, numbered in their ranks the type of red blacks "bordering on" the griffe, according to the colonial scale. Did Saint-Méry by mistake limit the descriptive "red" to certain ethnics or—what is less likely—were these special indications which the colonists in search of their slaves, now Maroons, were bent on providing, especially if this unusual color were in these cases particularly distinctive of such or another slave and not therefore generalized? It is the same with hair and beard, about which we know that "almost beardless" and "short, woolly hair" hardly typify the slave. By indicating contrary characteristics, the advertisements again contradict Moreau de Saint-Méry. It is not only mulatto Caribs who had "long very thick and black hair" or "wear their hair in pigtail," like the slave Zamor or Indian slaves in general. There is the black woman, Arina, "wearing her hair long," the creole Alexis "with braided hair," Hazard, "a male with black hair and a queue tied with a ribbon." There was the dark-skinned Lafortune, a Coromantee "very dark with long hair," Jean-Jacques, a creole slave "has his hair braided," Hector, a Congo, wears a pigtail. Joseph, a Peul, has "long thick hair always dressed with a buckle and in a long queue."

Infrequently there was to be found "a Congo black without hair," a Congo "with red hair," or Ibo "with a half-shaven head" or a bald Negro.<sup>59</sup> Particularly surprising after statements to the contrary by Saint-Méry, there

was an even greater number of bearded slaves, as follows: Claude, a bearded creole violinist . . . a new Negro, gray-bearded . . . Suzanne, a creole in Trou, long hair down to her waist . . . a heavily bearded Congo . . . three new Sosso with long beards, fugitives from Mr. Plat Després' place called 'Agréable-Vue (today Desprez-Bellevue) located at Morne de l'Hôpital<sup>60</sup> . . . Louis, a Congo with a tuft of beard around the mouth . . . a new slave, Congo, with a long beard. The same observation is to be made with respect to Moreau de Saint-Méry's statements about teeth and what the advertisements reveal about them.

Saint-Méry states that the Mondongos and the Mousombis were cannibals. This may be so, and it is not by chance that our folklore has perpetuated the tale in which Malice with great relish eats Bouqui's mother. Would this belief as held by Saint-Méry be based on the fact that Mondongos and Mousombis had "incisors filed down into so many sharp, flesh-ripping canine teeth"?<sup>61</sup> How then explain the custom of "sharpened teeth" noted in the descriptions, not for Mondongos and Mousombis alone, but for the Aradas, Ibos, Congos and Nagos?

Many of those so described were by no means lovers of human flesh, this practice having been illustrated only once during all the period of colonization and then by a white<sup>62</sup> who, in order to chastise a slave, tore him apart with his teeth.

A male Ibo with sharpened teeth . . . a Nago male with reddish skin and teeth filed . . . a Congo with pointed upper teeth . . . a Nago with red skin and upper teeth filed . . . Azar, an Ibo male, black face, front teeth filed and blackened . . . Jean-Phillipe, male Congo with pointed teeth. . . Upon looking at the multiple examples in each of the ethnics, one might suppose that Saint-Méry sometimes drew conclusions lightly. Again, it was he who saddled the same Mondongos, this time linked with the Calvary people, with indulging in unnatural vices,<sup>63</sup> which it was said the aborigines of the island had long ago adopted as custom. These vices have not in any case surfaced in the Haitian community. They are moreover considered nonexistent—a rather rare circumstance in today's world—especially in the rural areas, among the peasants, who comprise three-quarters of our population but have not been touched by this almost universal and long established wave of sexual perversions.

In contrast, Mozambique males, those of Madagascar and the contingents from East Africa did practice castration. It is known that eunuch slaves from this part of Africa found an assured outlet in the harems of the Orient. In Saint-Domingue we find a slave named Henry, a Maroon, with no brand, who had been described as "a eunuch from youth." He did not know the name of his "nation" and because of this it could not be affirmed that he was a Mozambique.

Saint-Méry would also claim that Calvary women, though very beautiful, were nevertheless spoiled by overgenerous breasts. We find creoles who also



"have oversized breasts" and even, strange to say, the Mandingo Léger, a slave in Saint-Marc parish, "with breasts like a woman," or Téton, "a male with a bosom like a woman." Whatever the case, deformed, fallen, and pendulous breasts resulted from the custom among African mothers of carrying their infants behind them securely attached by a large band of cloth thus exerting an excessive and continuous pull on the breasts and misshaping them from the time of first maternity. The rare times that descriptions read "firm breasts" were in the cases of young girls or young women between fifteen and twenty years of age. Insofar as pierced cheeks, ears and noses are concerned, the "descriptions" generalized these customs for all ethnics. The Mozambiques still observe in our time the practice of piercing the nose and introducing into the orifice a vegetable stem, a tress of cotton, or a spongy tissue for filtering impurities and other forms of pollution in the air. Sometimes the advertisements provide such descriptions:

Désirée, a Nago, has two holes in her nose, one through her lip . . . a Thiamba male pierced through the cartilage separating the nostrils . . . Sara, a new black with pierced ears and aquiline nose . . . Marguerite, a Thiamba, has her upper lip pierced . . . Charlemagne, a new Negro, has his ears pierced . . . a slave woman "with a hole in each ear for introducing a *calumet de cachimbo*."<sup>64</sup> Rose, a new black Congo, having both ears pierced . . . Vène, a new black, wearing several necklaces . . . Adelaide, an Arada, with her nose pierced . . . Couacou, a Quiamba, "with a ring in his nose." In a general sense, one can look for a portrait of the slave in all of this odd conglomeration of special signs only by grouping traits becoming common when they are frequently repeated and by eliminating oddities relating only to such and such a slave.

Of course, one would not take into consideration for example the fact that some slaves might have had "four toes," "six toes," or even "no toes on the left foot," or perhaps had a "white testicle." On the other hand, we would take into account "very large navels"—these cases being much more frequent and those malformations arising from hasty and charlatan methods of ablating the umbilical cord in the course of deliveries devoid of even the most elementary precautionary measures. In the same view, we will accept as indices supplied by advertisements those details which clearly characterize the slave and serve to reconstruct his image.

Some examples: The very dark skin of the Sudanese group of Africans—Senegalese, Yolofs and Bambaras. This unadulterated blackness (*nette et franche*), this shining skin providing a dark background for the greater brightness of the eyes and whiteness of teeth helped the trader to win a bonus as much as did good health, which experienced merchants knew how to determine by licking the chin of the slave, to discover through the taste of the sweat if the captive was perfectly healthy or not.

The red or reddish skin, the deep-set eyes, exceptionally beautiful teeth, the bowlegs, knockknees and flat feet; the red eyes, the *retroussé* top lip,

the red-bordered lips, widely spaced or defective teeth, the flat nose, bulging eyes, well-turned legs and thighs, the pretty face, heavy lips, a well-built (*cambré*) male, heavy and robust, knockknees, dark eyes, a beautifully shaped woman, a stocky male, full regular features, a round face and one elongated, a lazy gait, an aquiline nose. . . . From one slave or another, all these characteristics derive in thousands of examples. We shall see, further on, information about height, which will round off the physical type of Saint-Domingue Africans as described to us in the "announcements."



## Physiological Condition of the Maroons

SLAVE ADVERTISEMENTS described the condition of Maroons recaptured and taken to jail and of those still fugitive. They were, for example, described as "very robust," or "has good complexion," "thin and worn out," or "bent and worn out." In addition to these general descriptions, mention was made of specific infirmities: (deaf, a mute, blind, simpleminded); common illnesses (hernia, yaws, scabies, aging, pregnancy), the effects of hunger or of epidemics (smallpox), and also the evidence of work accidents or of fights during pursuit and capture, clearly evident scars resulting from the whip and other cruelties of slavery. All told, a most atrocious picture.

Malnutrition appears to have been the most distressing lot of the slave, representing the most serious and incomprehensible negligence on the part of the colonist. In order to adequately feed himself, the slave had frequently to resort to pillage. When he stole cane, it was at the risk of terrible punishment. At night he would venture forth to filch from a neighbor's or from the plantation garden perhaps some sweet potatoes, or an ear of corn, green bananas not yet ripe. Sometimes to satisfy his hunger he had to content himself with a few wild roots and tubers boiled in water lacking salt and fat. The more fortunate by chance managed to trap a bird or catch a fish or some small game. On the plains marked for cane cultivation, the areas to be planted were despoiled of the unwanted shade trees. Thus all the fruit trees had disappeared. They could have been providentially helpful as is the mango tree today, providing over the long months as it does a miracle food.

The mango tree was first introduced in Saint-Domingue in 1784 with some plants from the island of Bourbon, later varieties being imported through Jamaica in 1787.<sup>65</sup> In contrast, already known were the papaya, apricot, pineapple, melon, *mombin*, custard apple, *cacone* (or little calabash), guava, sapodilla, *jaune d'oeuf*, orange, and that other miracle fruit, the avocado.<sup>66</sup> Stealing and pillaging helped the slave to live, rather survive, on this fortuitous diet—a very difficult battle when the little personal garden no longer existed, when the drought was killing off millet and sweet potatoes, and the master withheld the handouts of manioc and meat. It is not surprising that hunger decimated the mass of slaves constrained to the hard labor of the

plantations and the factories. It has been noted that, whenever the subsistence gardens were ravaged by prolonged drought, first to be affected were the slave gardens, for which water could be provided only by rainfall or when stolen from the master, or by floods which carried off arable soil along with plants and birds; the resulting scarcity of food would bring on an increase in marronage. This is quite possible and apparently a logical conclusion. Letters of the plantation managers expressly support the idea. Nevertheless, the graph described by fugitive slave announcements does not provide any significant indication of correspondingly renewed outbreaks of marronage. The parish of Saint-Marc provides a case in point.

Whether because communication facilities made it possible for colonists to place fugitive slave notices in the press, or whether because of its position as a crossroads providing immediate access to the fertile neighboring plains, both by the Petite Rivière and the Black Mountain on the frontier road, and Grandes Savanes, then Spanish, Saint-Marc bears the well-deserved reputation of having been one of the main centers of marronage. When, in 1784, in the Saint-Marc region, floods destroyed food crops, the administration permitted American ships to enter the port of Saint-Marc so as to provide settlers "food for their slaves." This measure was in force from July to November.<sup>67</sup>

In 1789, this time following a bitter winter that reduced exportations and delayed ships supplying Saint-Domingue, the administration was again obliged to open this port to the entry of certain items, such as foreign flour and biscuits. Adopted April 1, this measure was extended to 1790. Yet, neither before nor during the severe shortage of crops or importations from France, nor even afterward when food supplies were again normal and the port again closed did the number of Maroons vary significantly. At all times the numbers were high. Such a verified fact seems to cast doubt on the apparently logical assertion. Could it have been that, in the mind of the slave, the period of deprivation he was experiencing was not generalized and, therefore, hardly a good time to attempt to take to the hills? Could it be that, disconcerted by these circumstances, the slave discerned the wisdom of sharing his misfortune in familiar surroundings (among known comrades) from whom, somehow or other, he could hope for ultimate help? A plausible hypothesis, one that draws reinforcement from the practice of slave owners during such disasters<sup>68</sup> either to close their eyes to thefts of cane or to relieve the slaves of sole responsibility for solving the food problem.

It is known that in these situations the manager, with an eye to the feeding of the work gang, would break out reserves of cured fish or meat so as to avoid excessive deaths. It was in times like these that the slave received his food directly from the manager who would rather split himself in two than incur the justified wrath of the proprietor because of a consistently inadequate program of nourishment.<sup>69</sup> Did this occasional good fortune come



into play in times of food shortage, and did the slave tend to exploit this fat and unexpected windfall?

However strange such a hypothesis, it is the only one worthy of consideration in light of the marronage graph figures showing absolutely no correlation with these occasional periods of food shortage. As a matter of fact, what is most often meant by the term "food shortage" (*disette*) is a shortage of flour, biscuits, meat, dried fish and, even more, provisions for the big house. Moreover, it was the masters who then found themselves short of wines and butter, the complement of ships' consignments in their behalf.

As for the slaves, alas! it is only too well known that whatever came down to them was doled out throughout the year in dribbles or not at all. Whatever the case, the example of Saint-Marc is, doubtlessly, insufficient to support so bold a conclusion. Admittedly, it suffers from limitations of time and space. Let us examine another example of the long-range effect, however relative, of food shortage on marronage declared in advertisements. We will consider the period beginning with the end of the American war and continuing to the revolts of 1791—an eight-year period embracing the colony as a whole. Herein are observable on the one hand certain causes of marronage such as increased workload in forced labor, a result of prosperity and the habit of reducing the number of field hands in favor of excessively enlarged domestic staffs; sometimes epidemics, droughts or floods. On the other hand, there were factors likely to discourage marronage: extension of the requirement to provide slave gardens and to establish food crops, a certain evolution in the mentality of the colonist leading to relative amelioration of slave conditions, and, the war concluded, the reinforcement of slave discipline and surveillance, a more active organization of searches and slave pursuits by the police. In sum, for a slave's lot, even if relatively improved, there were increased measures for thwarting escapes. What was the evolution of marronage during these years of great prosperity?

Clearly the answer is that the number of Maroons multiplied and continued to multiply at, no doubt, an alarming rate. The following figures and commentary illustrate the point.

With respect to the effect of shortages in the food supply there was no apparent increase in runaway slaves. Neither was there an increase during epidemics such as the smallpox epidemic still rampant in 1783, 1784 and 1785. Continuous malnutrition must have served as one cause of slave runaways. Occasional food shortages and epidemics seemed in any case, to have increased slave mortality rather than slave desertions. This is not the direction in which basic causes for slave flights must be sought. The slaves were more hungry for freedom than for food. There is no other explanation for this sharp increase in marronage during the period of great prosperity in Saint-Domingue.

Let us look deeper into the matter. Some of my colleagues, thinking they had detected a decrease in the number of slave flights beginning in 1789, were

truly astonished at this apparent slackening of marronage at precisely the moment when revolt was beginning to rumble and the general uprising of the slaves was close at hand. First of all, the statement is without foundation. Far from diminishing, marronage increased markedly. Should it have been possible to discern in this rapid escalation breaks due to some specific strategy? No one would refuse to acknowledge, had they existed, voluntary regressions, which would, moreover, be self-explanatory. But it is impossible not to acknowledge evidence that the graph of slave flights rises sharply without a break. This increase would quickly become open rebellion, imparting to the maroon movement an impetus towards the armed revolts which were from the beginning associated with it. What has not been said is that, rather than a diminution in the number of flights, there was periodically a reduction in fugitive slave advertisements. Why? We will attempt an answer.

Beginning with the Revolution of 1789, a new colonial mentality began to take form. The Declaration of the Rights of Man was not without echo. No longer was it "Long live the King," but, rather, "Long live the Nation, the Law and the King." Further, there were colonists who hastened to delete from their names particles and endings such as "du" and "des", likely to be misinterpreted and taken as evidence of political alliance with a nobility increasingly in disgrace.

The *Gazette des Cayes* adopted an ironical note in an open letter to subscribers:

Please if you will, Gentlemen, forgive us if because of the allegiance and obedience we owe to the municipal officers representing the commune of Les Cayes you find our succeeding editions arid, dry and consequently barren of the slightest interest. We shall focus heavily on exact details and circumstances concerning stray animals: They will be described in such manner as to make them recognizable without your having to inconvenience yourself with a visit to the jail. This cannot fail to be very entertaining, especially in times of trouble when strays are to be seen everywhere. . . .<sup>70</sup>

Who can fail to understand that these "animals," these "strays," and "unclaimed" were in great numbers none other than slaves?

Consider these orders issued to the press:

We likewise insist that you conform . . . to article 4 of the Decree of the 4th of January last which declares as follows: "All discussions about coloreds, free negroes and slaves is forbidden Gazeteers and Journalists." You will therefore delete from the pages you present for clearance all items which could be considered contrary to this provision. . . .

Three months later the *Les Cayes* newspaper noted with, again, the same irony:



Since we are unable to provide any colonial news whatsoever we are going to pull together observations about various realms made by the best political writers. . . .

Sufficiently suggestive?

Nothing prevents the publishing of fugitive-slave advertisements or notices of slave ship arrivals. Only in the South, and only in 1792 was there official proscription against any declaration concerning slaves and freedmen, although that regulation did not close the door on bulletins about slave-ship arrivals nor on announcements of slave flights. Masters were ill at ease about displaying publicly anything relating to the slave trade and slavery. Hence the silence about marronage. Few colonists still dared to declare their losses. Is it inappropriate to describe henceforth the increasing desertions? The managers were happy with this almost general silence. Besides, they were the least inclined to declare fugitives; that reflected with indiscreet eloquence the abuses of which they were precisely guilty, beginning with the cruelties and the hunger which they inflicted on the work gangs. The proprietors were then almost all of them in France, and the managers took advantage of this absenteeism to pressure the slave and to make illicit profit on clothes and food. It is clear they were happy about the silence easily extended over Maroon activity. This silence cloaked their hidden gains. Other colonists, nevertheless, did dare to announce flights. In the future, they would continue to do so, frequently in veiled language. During certain periods none of them wished to mention the word "marronage"—the word had become scandalous. Mention becomes rather a question of subtle metaphors—"stray slaves," a slave "who perhaps has been led astray" or "suborned." Request was made that "Those who have given him shelter return him to the owner."

With the same reticence a Jérémie advertisement described "a slave about four months an émigré." In the new climate the word "émigré" seems less shocking than "Maroon." Of the use of timid approximations or of the straining for a curious innocence in words—as though vainly to disguise a shame—there are many examples in the style of the following advertisement:

A young slave named Anthony, Congo, bearing the brand Claudine and lower down, Cap, an émigré since 25 September. Those having information on his whereabouts are asked to inform Mr. Castillon. Spanish Street, the home of his Mistress.<sup>71</sup>

Nothing better indicates the new tone in the press during the years 1792, 1793 than these rather suggestive extracts from the daily Cap newspaper *Le Moniteur Général de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue* or from *L'ami de l'Egalité*:

For sale, a plantation six leagues from Cap with thirty slaves remaining of eighty-six who were on the plantation before the insurrection. The public

is advised that the pastoral charge at Cap is vacant due to the sailing of Abbé Cibot. All who wish to apply for this opening are advised that no one will be considered who finds it difficult to pronounce the word "republic".

"Wanted, someone willing to place a group of twenty negroes on an active coffee plantation in a section of the colony which was not burned out. A suitable business for one who has salvaged negroes from the insurrection."

Further, it was the period when Sonthonax, on 30 December 1792 announced:

The judgment that a sortie against the slaves is absolutely necessary invites all citizens of good faith to register with the Secretariat of the Government.

Announcements of sales of stray or incarcerated slaves hardly ever appeared now in the press. Even the government itself recoiled from fulfilling its obligations in these troubled, anguished times, when colonists announce their intention to free their slaves more often than they declared in embarrassed terms, continued flights of the latter.

—A new Mozambique black strayed.

—A black slave woman has disappeared. Any persons sheltering her are asked to return her to Madame Mompelcier at Petit-Carénage.

—A negro hairdresser has been absent from her owner five or six days.

—Emigrated, a Mondongo named Francis. Left last night after having served the same master for forty-five years.

—A young creole black from Charleston emigrated since the previous Sunday.

—Strayed last Saturday afternoon a black cow with white spots, ready to drop her calf. Carries Maze brand on one thigh.

Curiously enough the same caution obtained even when mentioning the field animals which were always lumped with the Africans. On the other hand, the most frequent announcements were of the following type:

—Citizen Bailly Blanchard announces his intention to free his Negress Geneviève.

Citizen J. B. La Fontange plans to give Negress Marie-Catherine her freedom.

—Citizen Dujardin, authorized agent for Barré de Saint-Vincent and resident of Quartier-Morin, proposes to set at liberty the creole negress Geneviève.

—Citizen Marie-Marthe intends to give Marie-Pauline her mulatto slave her freedom.

—Citizen Duteuil is about to take steps to free a mulatress in recompense for her faithful service.

As can be seen, Maroons were less frequently declared—and with good reason. Their descriptions became more and more discreet and shamefaced. It would be an error to believe that their number decreased simply because



the announcements decreased. Let us specify dates. Until 1791, the number of fugitive-slave announcements was always very high. From the time of the general revolt in the provinces of the North and the August slave uprisings, the colonists tended to refrain from these announcements. Some of them had lost all their work gangs in desertion. It was no longer a question of declaring flights from some or other plantation. No longer circumscribed by individual infractions and displays, the problem of desertions was general in scope, linked to a broad solution.

Thus the colonists shied away from the expensive and ineffective practice of advertising runaways. An organ like the *Journal politique de Saint-Domingue*, of 1792, carried a total of three fugitive notices and two reports about a slave boy and slave girl, both "strayed." The same journal, on the other hand, is full of daily reports of troop actions against armed slaves in desertion and always ready for action.

From that time on, colonists who had lost the habit of publicizing desertions definitely gave up the idea, even refusing to fulfill their obligation, specified and renewed from 1789 through 1792, to "forward without delay a report on slaves in marronage, including age, descriptions, brands and periods of absence from domicile and plantation."<sup>72</sup> The administration was becoming concerned. Since 1789, the Provincial Assembly of the North had alerted districts, committees, and area commandants to keep informed on the alarming increase of Maroons. These statistics on the extent of losses held no interest for the colonists. They were, perhaps, beginning to understand that the fat was in the fire and that statistics were now but a vain exercise. . . .

At any rate, year by year analyses of announcements fail for various reasons to reflect the actual increase in marronage—at least in any reliable way.

The notices mention not only slaves whose desertions were declared by their masters and the small number recaptured as a result of the advertisements, but also the rather more numerous slaves who unluckily had been arrested, finding themselves in jail or for sale as unclaimed, without ever having been previously the subject of public announcements of runaway Maroons. The lists of unfortunate Maroons caught, arrested, taken to jail, or put up for sale as unclaimed were enormous—often even more important than those of runaway slaves declared by the owners.

Should it be hastily concluded from this that a large percentage of Maroons were recaptured, a fact which would serve to lessen if not invalidate the adequacy of the announcements as indicators of progression in marronage? Hardly a reasonable point.

Once again the most evident fact is that few masters resorted to announcements for declaring their losses. Further, there is no indication that the majority of Maroons were retaken. If, to repeat, it is noted that frequently the lists of the captured were longer than the lists of those fled to marronage, it

can only mean that comparison was with flights declared, not with real losses and total desertions to marronage. Further, one particularly odd fact must be kept in mind. Descriptions of slaves in jail or on sale as unclaimed are but a minute percentage compared with the descriptions (name, height, age, sex, nation, and so on) of slaves declared as fugitives. Information supplied about the captured slaves specified that they were "picked up in the Spanish sector," "brought back from the Spanish area," "arrested by the police," seized at such and such a place, taken to jail. . . . These were, of course, Maroons, but rarely those declared by their masters and described in press announcements. More often than not, the descriptions were absolutely new ones, referring to undeclared Maroons but nevertheless Maroons seized in flight and brought back in chains. What is the conclusion to be drawn?

If the percentage of Maroons declared and captured was particularly small, it follows, in light of this unequivocal statement and from that ratio of captures, that the mass of Maroons arrested without ever having been declared permits, in logical comparison, the supposition of an unsuspected, extraordinary, irreversible pattern.

We should, however, guard against tripping down the incline of too-convenient conclusions. In any case, the fact that so many undeclared fugitives might have been arrested, that it might also have been possible to count so many acknowledged Maroons still at liberty, with even more certitude lends importance to the descriptions as indices for revealing the year-by-year development of marronage.

In these lists we have made no attempt to separate acknowledged Maroons from Maroons seized after having been declared, or Maroons picked up in the absence of previous announcement. All were at one and the same time guilty of being fugitives, and it is this development we are attempting to trace by means of the suggestive information the descriptions supply, without considering so hazardous an undertaking as to organize them by groups—on the one hand Maroons lost, on the other, Maroons recaptured. And were we to succeed in grouping recaptured Maroons,<sup>73</sup> we could not as a consequence know the number of slaves who became Maroons. In short, we must be content with the already precious light provided by the descriptions without trying to find therein the key to every unknown.

There are fewer fugitive slave announcements in 1764 or in 1765. The press was then in its early beginnings. Not only were the colonists still unfamiliar with this practice, but also the gazettes were less developed and thus reserved much less space for these notices than later when these journals ran supplements or parallel editions with supplements and various advertisements simultaneously at Cap and at Port-au-Prince, not to mention special journals such as *La Gazette des Cayes*, *L'Observateur Coloniale*, or *Les Avis du Cap*.

This increase in advertising may have been due to the rather active interest management focused on the income from this source, editorial activity varying according to whether headed by Monceaux, de Marie, Bourdon, Du-



buisson, Gattereau, or Charles Mozard. Besides, the absence of or difficulties with communication between regions must not be overlooked. It was only in 1781 that the Cayes-Port-au-Prince and Cayes-Cap linkage was assured by two couriers.<sup>74</sup> From that date, the announcement reads: "Response Cayes to Port-au-Prince is possible within eight days instead of thirteen, from Les Cayes to Cap in seventeen days instead of a month."

It was also in 1781—to cite only the southern region—that more or less regular connections were established with Tiburon, Côteaux, Dama-Marie, Nipes, Miragoâne, Petit-Goâve, Léogâne, and Jacmel. . . . Yet, on the other hand, complete percentages for annual slave importations or even the percentages of slave births and deaths that would support statistically reliable conclusions about this comparative increase in marronage are lacking. Yet it is true that the multiplicity of restrictions and roadblocks, the increasing severity in the surveillance and control of work gangs and in "disciplining" slaves, the renewal of slave raids, and other facts of marronage, the increasingly massive desertions of new blacks, the increased malaise observable in the colony—together these revelatory indices undoubtedly betray progressive intensification in marronage during the last years of colonization. One can scarcely fail to recognize this.

Doubtless the situation varied from parish to parish, from one work gang to another, but, so far as marronage is concerned, the reality is that desertions increased at an alarming rate. Many announcements make this clear. At the time of sales or imminent departure, the colonist was resigned to openly publicizing his distress once and for all:

"Citizen Vaisse, resident of Grand Boucand gives notice that his slaves are all in insurrection."

. . . "Citizen Moreau offers for sale his remaining slaves."

[A resident of Plaisance advises that] "his land and his slaves have not been affected by the insurrection," [but he desires] "an associate with some slave property."<sup>75</sup>

Sorties against slaves were multiplied, as all eligible men from the parishes were called to arms.

"For our own safety it is time that we accurately determine the number of desertions," [declares a colonist who again proposes to the intermediary commission to organize a mandated census establishing] "the number of slaves before the revolt, the number returned to the plantations, dead or absent, the names, age, sex of the remaining slaves."<sup>76</sup>

Mr. Dumas goes a step further. He regards the black domestics as the real sustenance of this spirit of rebellion and proposes to banish them all to the fields, replacing them with whites or with hired freedmen.

"Who," he cries before the Assembly, "who overhears our conversations, who is it that has spied upon our every move? The house slaves. Who has

infused the others with that spirit of revolt which has suddenly erupted in the northern province? The house slaves. They are the most dangerous."<sup>77</sup>

In 1791 a large number of Maroons, some 4600 are announced in the press, the largest number ever carried thus. However, it can be noted that after the revolt in the northern parishes the word "slave" is replaced by a somewhat more obscure term. From the distant past of the Spartan serfs, the word *helot* is resurrected: "Yesterday, Wednesday, the execution of six Helots took place in a Spectacle that should strike fear in the audacious [blacks] of all kinds. . . ."<sup>78</sup>

To sum up, as before, after the American war, in 1789, in 1790 as in 1791 on the eve of the general revolt, in spite of the chance metaphors found here and there, fugitive-slave announcements numbered in the thousands. It was only beginning in 1793 that they disappeared almost completely due to the circumstances and reasons already indicated.

At that time the administration rather timidly again proposed the compiling of statistics on runaway slaves. It would have been wise to determine the real extent of these flights so carefully concealed by the colonists. But the authorities continued to be afraid of such statistics, afraid to discover the actual increase in the class of freedmen, or to declare it. We will describe this ostrichlike behavior—this fear of making known the growth of marronage and the rebellion which was spreading so rapidly. To be kept in mind is the figure declared by the bourgeois representatives of the French slave ports (*villes de Commerce et les Colonies réunies*) shocked by the new disaster affecting Saint-Domingue. Their petition to the National Assembly demanded urgent and indispensable aid:

10 ships of 200 to 300 tons for the West and the North loaded with flour, wine, biscuits, vegetables, ironwork, coarse linen, 4000 troops, 600 workers, an advance of 120 millions for rebuilding plantations, villages and burned-out warehouses, 10,000 mules and horned animals, 200,000 agricultural tools and 12,000 Negroes. . . .<sup>79</sup>

Even admitting that desertions had fallen off at the approach of the revolution, which was far from the case, such an ephemeral pause would not in the least have weakened the spirit of the rebellion. Would not a drop from the high point of fugitive slave flights serve to indicate that the slaves were becoming more and more aware of the approaching end? If the storm was about to burst, if the promise of a liberating dawn was already outlined against Saint-Domingue skies, would not the normal psychological reaction of this moment have been to await the opportunity for a collective salvation instead of attempting the risky individual escape scarcely facilitated by the nightly house searches from work gang to work gang increasingly in vogue in the North, for example? Might not the watchword have been for the slave to lull any suspicion on the part of the masters by observing a well-calculated strict submission before striking in a body, once and for all? It is useless diversion



to speculate on the evolution of marronage, hidden or not. All during the years approaching the end of the colonial period, there was, clearly and incontestably, an upward spiraling in the incidence of slave flights.

It is time now to return after the digression to the physiological condition of the slave as revealed to us in announcements of runaways, captures and sales of unclaimed slaves. If among the slaves held in jail or those unclaimed strays up for public sale there appeared many gasping, worn-out, perhaps starving Maroons, it must not be forgotten that these were recaptured after long chase or encounters with the police, slaves who, in the expectation of liberty, had already experienced the effects of great privation as Maroons.

As for Maroons still at large, the masters who declared these flights made more mention of Negroes "of stout build with sound constitution" or "well-built with good calves" than they did of sick and puny slaves. Born to Bantu or Guinean climate, agricultural and pastoral people par excellence, the Africans were endowed with extraordinary resistance. That so many should have survived the crossing by slave ship—fatalities were only 15 to 25 percent—or the hellish regimen of slavery, expending therein an average of some ten to fifteen years in daily labor before becoming completely worn out, is solid evidence of a race possessing exceptional courage and unquestionable endurance. The statistics bear this out. Nevertheless slaves were frequently afflicted with common maladies which can be grouped as follows: natural infirmities, common illnesses, effects of hunger and epidemics, scars from work-related accidents, scars from fighting during marronage, scars from whipping, and other cruelties of slavery.

Among the natural infirmities were some cases of deafness, blindness, and mental derangement:

- A slave woman apparently crazy, leading a saddled and bridled horse;
- Jean-Pierre, a creole forty years old and blind, arrested in the Spanish sector with Angélique, forty-five, a Nago, very red and bearing the marks of her country;<sup>80</sup>
- A blind Negro "good for the wheel";
- A Negro "blind in the right eye";
- A Negro "covered with *feux volans*";\*
- Victoire, a Sosso, "suffering from leprosy";<sup>81</sup>
- Jean à Bedou, creole slave from Maribaroux "mentally off, nearsighted";<sup>82</sup>
- A Mondongo woman, bearing no brand, "mentally deranged,"<sup>83</sup> another of whom it was said that she had a "deranged mind";
- "A mute, toothless slave, very nimble";
- Another with a "pronounced stammer."

We know that with respect to slaves with mental afflictions, or those who were deaf mutes and whom the slave merchants had managed to "slip by" in a group, the former were obligated to reimburse the purchaser the price even

\* Hives.

after the sale had been completed. It is certain that many of the blind, deaf or insane acknowledged in the descriptions were slaves who became that way as a result of accidents or inability to endure slavery or to withstand nostalgia. Also to be noted are slaves afflicted by illnesses such as hernias, foot crabs, sores, yaws, and venereal diseases. We add to this old age and pregnancy which are conditions, not illnesses:

Anna, fifty-two years of age with graying hair and seamed face. . . . a male with blueish skin, the tip of one ear eaten by worms, has chancre of the nose and a large ulcer. . . . a male almost toothless, knees distended. . . . A male with only two teeth. . . .<sup>84</sup> a mangy female with an enlarged navel full of mange and chiggers. . . . a male with ulcers on his right leg; another, round-shouldered, shortsighted with fleshy ears. . . . a one-eyed, bowlegged male, the eye half out of the socket is covered with a cataract, yaws on the hips, thin, swollen feet with foot yaws (*crabes aux pieds*) . . . Zamor, mulatto Indian, a drunkard, infected with yaws, few teeth, entire body tumid. . . . a driver with thin legs completely covered with sores, walks like a slowpoke, finds walking painful, crooked mouth, thin and sickly . . . an African creole and a Senegalese, both old and broken . . . a male with a gray beard and doddering head . . . Laurent, an old creole Negro afflicted with hernia . . . a male with a large hernia, another with very large testicles . . . Charles, creole black with his natural part half-wasted; another always wears pantaloons, no doubt to hide his half-eaten-away testicles . . . a male wearing a bandage for hernia . . . Marie, six months pregnant wearing a simple iron collar . . . Colette, a Nago, pregnant . . . a very recently arrived female escaped with a breasting baby probably born aboard a slave ship. . . .<sup>85</sup>

Finally let us add the rare case of a slave turned maroon after a suicide try:

Jean Pierre, creole from Port-au-Paix, twenty-two years old, horribly disfigured under the chin, in the mouth and lips which are split in two by a large, very serious wound from a three-shot pistol which he fired one year ago in a suicide attempt; became a maroon immediately after the healing of his wound.<sup>86</sup>

The effects of hunger and epidemics are also current, especially smallpox scars. Feet or body "swollen," "thin," "very thin," "in bad condition," "broken down and without splint" are just so many indications already noted that betray the effects of inadequate diet, the visible signs of hunger.

Of all epidemics, traces of smallpox are the most prominent. When the colony is ravaged by an epidemic, the number of slaves described "scarred with smallpox" is considerable. Thus, from around 1782 up to about 1786 and even afterwards, the epidemic scarred the servile population with its characteristic pustules. In 1783 there were Maroons who were described as "recently having the smallpox." Moreau de Saint-Méry was about to leave



the island and was absorbed in putting his professional affairs in order and in liquidating his books, jewelry, and his two domestic servants, a mulatto hairdresser and an excellent black cook.<sup>87</sup> He noted that the epidemic ended in March 1783. Father Gabon gave the date as June 1783. Actually, according to the *Affiches*, it was still active during the last days of 1783 and even at the beginning of 1784, with some aggravated recurrences of the ravages of measles in 1785 and 1786.<sup>88</sup> Asselin Deslauriers, resident of Grand Boucan, announced that "having just suffered due to smallpox a considerable loss of slaves, (he) has for sale twenty-five *carreaux* of land payable in slaves."<sup>89</sup>

We are then in 1783. The *General Observations on Maladies in 1784*, which Mr. Jean Arthaud, physician at Cap, published in 1786 reveals that "in May [1784] smallpox began to appear at Cap. It is probably brought in by slave ships infested with it." Another doctor practicing in Port-au-Prince, Dr. Joubert de la Motte, says that in 1785 and 1786 "smallpox was still active with certain confluences. . . ."<sup>90</sup>

The epidemic exacted a continuous death toll in the work gangs. Nevertheless it was not a cause of marronage. Those Maroons who carried the scars of the disease were already cured. The heads of some of these were "half-bald due to smallpox." Once the pustules healed, they could not pass on the contagion, but for many months they could carry the characteristic traces which, as it were, pockmarked their bodies, especially the face. Hence such descriptions as a "negro pock-marked by smallpox,"<sup>91</sup> "greatly scarred by pox," or "pitted by smallpox"—the list is tremendously long.

The disease was not new to the Africans. They were familiar with it and since Africa had known by empirical methods how to cure it. In the Congo, at the time of the slave trade, "the remedy, curious as it may seem, consisted simply in scarring the forehead lightly and introducing a small amount of pus taken from a smallpox pustule and mixed with oil."<sup>92</sup> Once again we must defer to the evidence that the bush medicine of the African peoples, stripped of incantations and superfluous ritual magic, reveals itself to be very close to true medical science. The protection against smallpox as applied by the Congo people does not differ substantially from the vaccine to be discovered by Jenner only in 1798.

Meanwhile, in Saint-Domingue colonists concerned about protecting their slaves had them innoculated, a procedure introduced to the island by Siméon Worlock, a creole from Antigua, the brother-in-law of Daniel Sutton, another scientist, who was the source of Jenner's discovery.<sup>93</sup>

In addition, many ships engaged in the slave trade adopted myriad precautions to prevent any and all contamination of their cargo by smallpox. Even so, an epidemic sometimes did break out during a crossing. There is the example of the slave ship that was forced to dawdle its way with a shipment of "blacks newly recovering from smallpox." The case was not unique. In 1791, a group of adult males and females, boys and girls was offered for sale

after having "recently had the smallpox" aboard the vessel *Compte de Forcalquier* out of New Rochelle, arrived from the Gold Coast.<sup>94</sup>

The descriptions seldom indicate other endemic diseases such as malignant fevers or tuberculosis. This should not serve as a temptation to declare that these illnesses were not common. The Africans were highly skilled in taking care of these illnesses by means of miraculous cures derived from the vegetation.

There is much evidence of work-related accidents, one-armed males, for one example. It is surprising that there were not more women who had lost an arm. It is the women who fed the mills, more precisely the grinders, with cane stalks. A moment's inattention and an arm might be pulled into the gears with the possibility of the whole body being dragged in, unless some alert conductor should quickly knock the already-crushed arm free. Also among the victims of accidents were those who suffered burns or who had been victims of various blunders in the mills during the active season or in the carting of cane and in the travail of labor.

Some examples: two large burns on the arms . . . both feet crippled . . . scars on the side of the thigh . . . three fingers missing, others crooked . . . front teeth broken . . . maimed right wrist . . . foot fractured . . . fingers of right hand burned . . . right thumb cut off . . . depression in forehead . . . burned hands . . . right inguinal hernia . . . right hand maimed . . . thumb missing . . . scar on nose . . . broken thighbone, poorly set . . . deformed right tibia . . . hands scarred by burns . . . two fingers crushed, broken leg . . . broken toe . . . eyes very weak . . . deformed thumb . . . rash covering stomach . . . big burn on left breast . . . right index finger cut off . . . one-eyed, finger broken . . . extensive wound on back of the hand . . . burn on abdomen . . . scarred back . . . scars extending from pit of stomach to navel . . . burn on left shoulder . . . right leg crooked . . . many burns on the chest.

Sometimes a Maroon bore fresh wounds as a result of skirmishes with the militia or with dogs hot on his heels at the time of pursuit and capture, in the course of which he must have stoutly defended his regained freedom before succumbing to wounds often serious or fatal. Follow some examples:

A black woman wounded in the head by a machete blow . . . Barbe, creole woman with knife cut on her neck, an infant at her breast . . . Samson, with a mutilated left ear and a saber cut on his neck . . . a Negro with head and arm wounds, arrested at Port-Margot . . . any number of "wrists cut off" . . . a Negro wounded on his upper right thigh, picked up in the Spanish sector . . . still another, having received a machete blow to the head, several in the arm and hand, picked up in the Spanish sector . . . a Maroon wounded by a blow to the navel, brought back from the Spanish area . . . Phaeton, a Congo, thirty years old, captured in the Spanish sector with wounds from several saber blows to the head and wrists . . . two new blacks, Soso and Poulard, seized in Piton des Flambeaux, both wounded, saber cuts on their



arms . . . males bearing the marks of a machete blow between the shoulder blades, on the arm . . . wounded by pistol shot in left buttocks and another in the knee, same side. . .

Finally, like some long litany of tears and suffering inscribed in the blood and on the flesh of the slave, the cut of the whip and the myriad physical cruelties of slavery are provided us by the words of the colonists themselves. Any commentary would be superfluous.

Large abscess on the right thigh and whip marks on the shoulders . . . a white scar low on one leg, feet like a dwarf, wearing an iron collar with a long chain, ears cut . . . has neck marks from an iron necklace . . . two females chained together branded LaBorde, attorney at Cap . . . a female wearing a three-pronged collar . . . wearing a collar with an iron mask . . . hole in one ear big enough to pass a finger through . . . right ear cut off . . . burn marks on the buttocks . . . a female hobbled on a short chain . . . a male with feet in stocks and two chain rings, one ear pierced with a big hole . . . a newly arrived male, his body covered with contusions, recently whipped, picked up in Borgne . . . Jean Louis, called Hector, a Congo, cut on his left ear, three *fleurs de lys* on his right shoulder and one on the left . . . a Negro cross-hatched with whip marks . . . a black woman with thighs completely scarred by whip lashes<sup>95</sup> . . . scar on the right breast, on the forehead and shoulder . . . both ears cut off, wearing an iron necklace with a long chain . . . scars on the abdomen and belly . . . both feet dwarfed . . . has deformed fingers and wearing a collar with three prongs . . . large scar on the buttocks . . . scars across the spine . . . two ears cut, large burn on the lower abdomen, very large hernia . . . wrist wound as result of being chained . . . right ear cut off . . . iron collar with chain around the neck . . . swollen and ill . . . has wound over eye also underneath the right arm . . . several head and body wounds, swollen left hand, has been struck on the forehead . . . blind in one eye, wearing an iron necklace with a long chain . . . tongue and left ear cut off, a hole in the nose, can hardly talk, wearing an iron collar. . .

There is evidence of frequently fatal wounds and blows, of which generally the hunted Maroons were victims. For example, the following advertisement is particularly suggestive:

Slaves in marronage: Philippe, reddish skin, creole from Haut du Trou carrying a machete . . . Eustace, reddish, a Miserable, twenty-nine years old, five feet four and a half inches tall; well built, coachman and hand-truck man . . . Crispin, a Congo, twenty-eight years old, smallpox scars . . . Marguerite, Ibo, from Mississippi, thirty-five years old, feet ulcerated with chiggers, escaped wearing a neck chain, the same day. Eleven Portuguese reward. Mme. de Trémais will pay this sum only if the negroes are handed over without any wounds or evidence of maltreatment.<sup>96</sup>

It is by no means difficult to imagine the brutality of the clashes during

the pursuit of Maroons who were frequently armed, and the triumphal reprisals. The floggings and blows which the militia brought into the hunt must have been practiced on the captured blacks as if to make them pay for the brutal fatigue and the long marches in the mountains, through brambled thickets or in the dangerous corridors of the faubourgs. Here, for example, is the report of a trophy brought back from a manhunt—a little piece of skin bearing a brand and taken from the dead body of a Maroon: "There has been also turned in to the jail at Saint-Marc a brand disclosing the word Andreau lifted from the chest of a negro killed in the woods."<sup>97</sup>

The ferocity of the militia was coupled with the ferocity of the dogs kept by a number of plantations and utilized in manhunts. Macandal, at the time of his flight, was recaptured thanks to dogs that had picked up his scent and discovered his hiding place. Taken thus, he was given a summary trial and broken alive on the wheel. Information about dogs trained to attack Maroons may be found in the national archives of Cuba.<sup>98</sup> In February 1796 Williamson dispatched the chevalier Kerenscoff to the Governor of Cuba for the purpose of acquiring "two hundred hunting dogs for use in wiping out the negro maroons who were infesting certain areas in the south of Saint-Domingue."

In the Warsaw Archives, in the files of the Polish Legion there is a report<sup>99</sup> by 2nd Lt. Weygell (file Dabrowski No. 9) from which the author has extracted essential details and which says in part:

Three days ago two hundred dogs were brought here. . . . We expect another 400 tomorrow. . . . They [Spanish specialists hired to train dogs] train them, turn them loose on live negroes whom the dogs ferociously tear apart and devour. . . .

The year is 1802 and the butcheries continued to the point of becoming real circus spectacles for the amusement of the sadistic Rochambeau.<sup>100</sup>



## Height, Age, Sex

THE HEIGHT of the Maroons ranged from that of a three-foot-four-inch dwarf—a Nago with reddish skin and hair—to a six-foot Congo arrested in Dondon, property of one Mr. David, who enjoyed the luxury of having this “Goliath” in his service.<sup>101</sup> In general, the slave was short, which in colonial terms meant about five feet in height. There was a fairly large number of slaves who were two or three inches taller than the five-foot average, but rarely did height exceed five feet five or six inches. This was true of the Nagos, Hausas, Aradas, Mozambiques, Congos, Minas, and Poulards. The Senegalese and Bambaras were the tallest—many of them being well above the average.

The descriptions examined do not permit the characterization of any given “nation” as tall or short. These descriptions are taken from specific cases representing only slaves of all origins who choose to be Maroons. They do show, however, that the Congos, who were numerically dominant at the end of the colonial period, were generally small—five feet to five feet three inches—compared to the Senegalese, the Bambaras or even the Mozambiques, the Yolofo and the Quiambas, the tallest and best built of the Africans in Saint-Domingue according to Malenfant, who attributes to them “a height varying from five feet five to five feet ten inches.” Anthropometry as a field of study is still in its infancy in Haiti, and for this reason we will tread lightly the terrain of comparisons. With respect to the earliest inhabitants of the island, historians are in agreement that the Siboney or Taino, despite their diet of seafood rich in phosphates, were “very short.”<sup>102</sup> With certain exceptions, the Africans arriving in Saint-Domingue did not exceed an average of 1.55 meters, less than the average for contemporary man, which is 1.65 meters and much less than the 1.79 of the contemporary Haitian, 92.8 percent of whom are above the average.\*

For the height of today’s Haitian we draw upon the “personal conclusions” of our friend Dr. J. B. Romain, Dean of the Haitian Faculty of Ethnology, based on a sampling of some 1730 individuals.<sup>103</sup> There is no doubt that after liberation succeeding generations of the transplanted African grew taller.

The ages indicated vary from breast-feeding babies carried into marronage

by their parents to a fairly large number of old men brought back from the Spanish sector, arrested in town or offered in sales of unclaimed slaves.

A few examples will better illustrate the point: a Spanish mulatto, Frances Martin, bearing the brand of Mr. Hudicourt, fifty-three years old . . . Alexis from the plantation of Mr. Mathon de Brotte aux Baradaïres, sixty years old . . . Babe, an Arada, property of a free Negro, Grosie, fifty-five years of age . . . Lisette, a black of seventy . . . Lafortune, a male also seventy praised by his master as a sailor on the *Dauphin* and described as having "white hair and beard" . . . "the Congo André, property of colonist Hamilet of Perches, at least eighty years old."<sup>104</sup> This André "troubled with a hernia" bowed by the weight of years, all his fingers and toes deformed, was perhaps the dean of Maroons. Brought into the country when a child, as a bent old man he married Télémaque and in October 1783 took leave, machete in hand, ready to defend his liberty and his remaining years.

At the same time and in contrast there are descriptions of runaway mothers who decided to be Maroons taking with them their very young children or babies still nursing at the breast. One example is Marie, an Arada of thirty-eight years, and her daughter Marie, seventeen, both described as beautifully built. The mother took her two other children, one two years old, the other four. There is Blandine, a Misérable of thirty-five years, and her daughter Adélaïde, who together ran away to freedom. The long, long list continues with babies of every age—even some born aboard slave ships whose mothers attempted to rescue them from slavery, carrying them off into marronage from the very moment of arrival in port.

Turning again to old men, we find Marie-Françoise, an Arada, and Cupidon, a Congo, both sixty-five. There were others not quite so old as Anna, a Mesurade; Jean, an Ibo; Marie-Madeleine, Bambara; Agatha, Congo; Alert, a Mondongo; Vérité, a Congo; Jean-Baptiste, Ibo; Christophe, a Creole; and Joseph known as Chouchou, all of whom were between fifty and sixty years of age. There were even some who were seventy—Lisette, a Ouanvonne, or Frances, a Congo, or several other males and females about to become octogenarians.

There are examples embracing the extremes of old age and infancy. The majority of the fugitives were in the age bracket seventeen to thirty-five—in effect these were people at the height of their physical powers whom slavery had not yet ruined physically and morally. Moreover, these were the ones whom the colonists sought out for hard labor, precisely those not resigned to their sad lot, or those desirous of the good things in life, amorous adventures, the pleasures of their age, like the Mesurade named Cambrouet, the property and coachman of Mr. Lines of Cap. He was, at twenty-four, five feet one, stocky and bowlegged; he took off with his *banza*, a type of four-stringed African violin. He is described as "a great banza player, singer, cajoler, running the dances at all the plantations." This type of frivolous absenteeism runs almost parallel with the increased number of slaves in the



prime of life who chose to make their move for liberty for no other reason than that they were seized with a hunger for it and not, like that songster, obsessed simply with thoughts of partying and "calinda" dancing.

The percentage of those between forty and fifty years of age is smaller. These are worn-out slaves whom the owners were about to resell or to neglect altogether, if they did not accord them an unofficial freedom (*liberté de savanne*) without benefit of a personal garden, by this means getting rid of unproductive arms and mouths. For these people, worn out on the job and prematurely aged, there awaited but declining years full of privations, ill health, and misery.

There was a considerable number of boys and girls from eight to sixteen years. Doubtless, for these young people there was more opportunity for escape. Often they were house-servants sent out "on commission," placed more or less outside the rigid code of the work gangs and the drivers' rod, enjoying thus a kind of liberty. It is not surprising that, at an age when life was just beginning, these adolescents or near adolescents, old enough to experience the horror of slavery, should have in great number responded to the call of the open road. For instance: Rosette and Mars, both creoles, ten years old . . . an Ibo, L'Amérique; Jean-Pierre Belaly, Mandingo; and another Rosette, creole; Henri, a creole, and a newly arrived Congo, Azar, were from twelve to fourteen years of age . . . Joseph, a creole; Elizabeth, a Soso; a Congo, Silvain . . . the Mossondy Janvier . . . Jean-Baptiste and Cupidon; Etienne, a mulatto from Cap; Jacques, a Misérable and Lindor, a Congo, were all between fifteen and sixteen. In their innocent anguish, they longed for a tranquil valley where, flitting free and joyously, birds sang to the passing wind and newly blossomed flowers. Perhaps there was in this fantasy the image, however imprecise, of the great bliss of being free. . . .

Was it not toward the gleam of such good fortune that these tired, broken-down old people, unresigned to dying while yet in chains, raised their emaciated arms? With a heavy heart we can imagine their pathetic pilgrimage toward the Spanish sector or in search of secure hiding places, on dusty roads, along difficult trails squeezed between ravines, in sun and rain, through moonless nights, stomachs empty, feet mangled by rocks or torn by brambles—stumbling, pulling themselves up weary, exhausted but never despairing of pulling their old, mutilated bodies through to freedom. Their last thoughts as they stumbled and fell for the last time must have taken them back to Africa where graying hair and beard bestowed the right to respect and admiration. There, the patriarch was the first to eat and to enjoy the choice parts of the gazelle. And at those traditional meetings, when the ancients sat in judgment on affronts to the sacred traditions, his people on bended knees would receive his blessing or, trembling, his malediction or—as was his right to administer even to adults of the family—the lash of his stick. How heavy with suffering must have been the drama of these old men, become fugitives

for freedom, with their gray hair, shaking heads, and faltering steps, in the twilight of so cruel, so abominable a life!

We can follow step by step the tragic destiny of one of these, Colin, age sixty-five, a Nago, with all of his fingers deformed, the property of Mme. Rouanet. He fled Port-Margot, was arrested at Limbé in October 1784. His owner learned of this but decided not to reclaim this useless mouth. Colin was but a shadow of the robust man he once was during his lifelong service to Mme. Rouanet. She preferred he be relegated to the scrap heap. Actually, he appears again in December 1784 in a sale of strays at the royal seat of Cap.<sup>105</sup> He would die of starvation without ever having glimpsed that golden liberty which he had struggled to attain. Meeting his end the same way was Joseph, between sixty-six and seventy years of age, slightly deaf, very thin and weak, fugitive from the Lombard plantation at Caracol, picked up at Grand-Bassin and taken to jail at Cap.<sup>106</sup> And so many others. . . .

With respect to sex, the data reveal that many more men than women became Maroons. The reverse would have been surprising given that the percentage of men brought in by the slave traders was always twice that for females. Despite this disproportionate scale, the number of women in flight was far from being a negligible quantity. It was on the order of 15 to 20 percent, a considerable amount considering the number of women imported from Africa and considering the greater possibilities they had through sexual activity or liaisons, to suffer less the constraints of slavery or the tragedy of loneliness. This being the case, it is surprising to find so few women in the little independent socialist state established by the Maroon leader, Santiago, in the Bahoruco mountains.<sup>107</sup>

But, when it is the group that becomes fugitive, women were present in numbers.<sup>108</sup> The fugitive group tried to secure the company of women, useful in the grinding of millet and in so many domestic chores. Maroon bands, when on foray, make a special effort to find a few women, domestics or field workers, whom they could carry off. It must be added that the role of women was as important in marronage as in colonial life in general, as it would be in the course of the struggle for liberty and equality prior to aligning the boundless courage of the Mary Jeans<sup>109</sup> for the epic of Independence.



## Maroon Names

INEVITABLY, MAROON NAMES were, for the most part, slave names, and here again the descriptions are of great interest. The slaves arrived from Africa bearing the name given them by their people. Names like Comba, Ouda, Limba, Acouba, Ayouba, Aboré, Hyohyo, Agouya, Ouagaou, Cocogniou, Sambou, Aoua, Decoua, Simbé, Aguinou, Apia, Divia, and others.<sup>110</sup> Once in servitude in Saint-Domingue, they were branded by an owner with an identifying stamp—the initials or the name of the plantation—indicating to whom he or she belonged and an address. Whether or not they were baptized, they were given Christian names or ordinary colonial names which they could carry for the rest of their lives. In rare instances slaves baptized as adults changed their names as for example Mercury, whom his master, Father Michel, priest at Fort-Dauphin, renamed Jean Louis.

The system of slave naming, a very common colonial practice, indicates more than ten different ways of choosing a slave name. There were names of saints, names from the calendar, names descriptive of character or special traits, names related to geography, history, or mythology, invented names or whimsical ones, structured first names, diminutives, and, finally, creole or African names. Added to this name—and customarily so among the slaves themselves—were African appellations that certain masters adopted for the purpose of more exact identification such as “the Congo negress Diane, known in her own tongue as Ougan-Daga.” . . . The Congos Azor, Nicaise, and Narcisse, “known in their own countries as Pambou, Sinchi and Zinga . . . the negro named Matta in his own land, known here as Magloire; a Congo male named l’Espérance or Saint Laurent and known by his Guinea name, Pauban. . . .”

Equally common, characteristic surnames would complement colonial names not sufficiently indicative for distinguishing between slaves with the same name, often from the same plantation. Thus, Caesar called Piedcourt [Short-Foot]; Joseph surnamed Landormi; Brutus l’Eveillé [the awakened one] or Jean à Bedou [Bedou’s son]; Magdeleine à Coudognan (Coudognan’s wife); Baptiste à Nanette and Baptiste à Fanchon (the reference is to the mother); Petit-Louis, grande Agnes, Mama Joseph, Vieille Roze and, finally, Jean Congo, Jean Bambara, Marie Congo (to distinguish her from other Mariés of the plantation or district who might be Arada, Hausa, Thiamba or creoles.

It was also customary to add a descriptive to the names of mothers such as "Man Louis," or "Man Jacques," by which they were identified with their firstborn. There was also the customary use of diminutives, usually for house slaves, where the name itself was lacking in the characteristic domestic and affectionate flavor, for example, Vanotte, Bibiane, Rosette, Lisette.

The colonial name of the slave was a first name, very rarely was it attached to a surname. The most commonly used names were César, Zaïre and Sans Quartier. These latter two were frequently found after 1776. Others were Jean-Baptiste, Zabeth, Toussaint, Télémaque, Nanette, Azor, Rose, Ursule, Léveillé, Marianne, and the long series of compound Marie and Jean names—Marie-Jeanne, Marie-Magdaleine, Marie-Louise, Marie-Victoire, Marie-Pierre, Marie-Joseph, Marie-Claire, Marie-Toulouze, Marie-Agnès, Marie-Goton, Anne-Marie, Marie-Catherine, Marie-Noëlle, Marie-Agnès, Marie-Marthe, Marie-Angélique, Marigrâce; Jean-Baptiste, Jean-Pierre, Jean-François, Jean-Paul, Jean-Marie, Jean-Joseph, Jean-Louis.

Sometimes men were given female names and vice versa. Thus we find males baptized Rosette, Sara, Pierrette, or women as Ulysse, Télémaque or George. Such are the broad observations deriving from the descriptions. Here for the sake of emphasis are slave names grouped, as far as possible, according to the choice, caprice, or fantasy of the master.

### *Popular Christian Names*

Pierre, Jean, Charles, Thomas, Jacques, Louis, Joseph, François, Paul, Etienne, Michel, Phillipe, Henri, Marie, Julie, Rose, Jeanne, Gabrielle, Geneviève, Cécile, Suzanne, Reine, Marianne, Pauline, Florence, Véronique, Pierre-Paul, Angélique. Add to this group the series of names derived from Dieu [God]: Dieudonné [God's Gift], Dieufait [Work of God], Dieujuste [Just God], Dieuseul [One God], Dieumerci<sup>112</sup> [Thanks to God], Mercidieu [God's Grace], and from the saints: Saint-Jean, Saint-Pierre, Saint-Louis, Saint-Marc. . . .

### *Names Derived from the Calendar*

Janvier, Février, Mars, Avril, Mai, Juin, Juillet, Août, Octobre, Novembre, Lundi, Mardi, Mercredi, Jeudi, Vendredi, Samedi, Dimanche, Noël, Toussaint, Printemps.

### *Names Taken from Geography*

Sénégal, Poitou, Luxembourg, Tourangeau, Saint-Marc, Saintonge, Port-au-Prince, Bourguignon, Dauphiné, Parisien, Rouen, Carthagène, Charles Grand-Goâve, Lagaronne, Languedoc, Cap, Maur, Thyamba, LaRochelle, Bengale, Anjou, Hollandais, Bayonne, Jacmel, Cul-de-Sac, Sud-Ouest, l'Amérique, l'Africain, Congo, Nago, Acra, Marseille.



*Designations Based on Character or Special Traits\**

Promise, La Santé [Healthy], La Guerre, Téméraire [Bold], Sansraison [Dumb], Sans Chagrin [Never Sad], La Tortue [Slowpoke], Perd-du-temps [Time-Waster], Alerte, Habile [Skillful], Sans-Façon [Simple], La Grandeur, Machoquet [Careless], La Douceur [Gentle], La Terreur, L'Eveillé [Wide-Awake], Libertin, Bistoury [the Knife], Désirée, Victoire, Vidargent [Energetic], Bienvenu [Welcome], Landormi [Sleepyhead], Papillon [Butterfly], Sans Souci [Frivolous], Belleface, Lambin [Slowpoke], Lajoie, La Déroute [Disorderly], Razoïr, Doucement [Gentle], Divertissant [Amusing], Lenfer [Hellish], Brisefer [Destructive], Vigilant, Tranquille,<sup>113</sup> Catin<sup>114</sup> [Immoral], Fidelle, Pénitent, Brouette [Wheelbarrow], Tambour [Drum], Satyre, Sans Quartier [Friendless], Prudence, Chaudière [Boiler], Bellamour, Heureuse [Happy], Grâce, Lamour, Reinette [Little Queen], Bonne [Upright], Content, Confiance [Confident], Langue [Mouthy], Démon, Beaufront, Bellhumeur [Good Humored], Poltron [Timid], Poli [Smooth], Bonaventure, Politès, Félicité, Charitable, Céleste, Controle.

*Fantasy Names*

Louis d'Or [Golden Louis], Prince-noir [Black Prince], Papa, Prêt à boire [Lush], Tu me Quitteras [You will leave me], Trop Cher [Too Expensive], Pistache [Pistachio], Quatre Cents Francs [400 Francs], Tempête, Mirleton [The Flute], Bongout [Good Taste], Bergamote [Sweet Man], Longitude, Compas, Equerre [The Square], Jasmin, Sonnet, Plumeau [Feather Duster], Toutmonbien [All my wealth], Sansnom<sup>115</sup> Anisette, Faveur, Dada [Hobby Horse], Tu m'aideras [You will help me] [Congo slave belonging to one Michel Brédy,<sup>116</sup> free black]. Father de Pradines, priest at Port-au-Prince in 1769 had occasion to advertise that three of his Mondongo slaves—Landormi [Sleepyhead], Lespiègle [Mischievous] and Vadeboncoeur [Go with Good Heart] had fled in marronage.

*Names from History or Mythology*

Thèbes, Amphion, Hector, Achille, Apollon, Hercule, Jupiter, Saturne, Vulcain, Zéphir, Zamor, Cicéron, Charlemagne, Arléquin, Azor, Candide, Darius, Céladon, Coridon, Cupidon, Léandre, Mercure, Mentor, Narcisse, Neptune, Néron, Oreste, Phaeton, Plutus, Pyrrhus, Pompée, Télémaque, Titus, Valère, Massillon, Molière, Racine, Voltaire, Homère, Juvénal, Chloris, Polidor, Alzire, Colin, Junon, Agathe, Ariane, Flore, Lucrèce, Antoine, David, Samson, Brutus, Cirus, Bacchus, Midas, Amadis, Zilia, Dalila, Adonis, Moïse.

\* Unlike the preceding names fantasy names and those denoting character or special traits can seldom if at all be translated to reflect exactly what the master had in mind.

*Diminutives, Surnames and Structured Names*

Margot, Marianne, Suzon, Jeannette, Jeanneton, Lisette, Zabeth, Pierre-Louis, Jean-Claude, Rosette, Vanotte, Fanchon, Nanette, Pierrot, Toni, Joute, Rosalie, Pauline, Coucoute, Lolotte, Clarisse, Charlotte, Marinette, Claudine, Paulo, Fanchette, Bibine, Mérance, Guitte, Babette, Charlot, Mimi, Grignotte, Béco, Zulmise, Jeannot.

*Creole Sounding Names*

Mandé, Paré, Latremblé, Chouquet, Yoyo, Yaya, Coachi, Bouqué, Cabrouet, Corossol, Café or Coffi,<sup>117</sup> Boisèche, Papaye, Grandgout, Patate, Callebasse, Yafait, Maringouin, Nangoût, Zozo,<sup>118</sup> Calinda, Mabi, Tambour, Panzou, Bouqui, Malice,<sup>119</sup> Codio, Jacquot, Baca, Goulou, Petro, Samba, Trempé, Grangozier, Zingua, Mouché, Coucouille, Bouré, Makaque, Anmoué, Mabouya, Cachimbo, Bobotte, Ety, Rada, Coco, Babichonne, Candio, Chat, Gnongnon, Fatras, Dodo, Quiquiri, Démaré, Tauraubande, Chita.

*African and Islamic Names*

Bari, Thisiman, Tamerlan, Aly, Soliman, Lamine, Hayda, Fatima, Alouba, Bonga, Bonna, Douagué, Méloui, Aza, Bézinga, Couacou, Conga, Bossi, Macouba, Goman, Agao, Yaga, Orcan, Fatmé, Matta, Petro, Sabadou, Jouba, Angouma, Ouata, Mayombé, Aboutou, Diaby, Chila, Ouala, Quimba (distortion of Thiamba), Couida, Aquiou.

*Names from the Contraband Trade*

These are the numerous Spanish creole slaves from across the border or from Cuba, English slaves, slaves from Curaçao and others who might, in Saint-Domingue, keep the names they had borne before misfortune in maronage or in the contraband trade brought them to the colony: Juan, Ouan, Pedro, Miguel, Thony, Elysabeth-Jenny, Ovaldo, Manuel, Coffi [for Coffee], Williams, Beneditto, Bissinthe (an English creole also speaking Spanish), a Maroon at Léogâne in 1777 (property of Mr. Charlot);<sup>120</sup> Jouanès (a Curaçao creole), Guillaume Schmit, Couc (for cook), Dick, Misis, Tom, Kembrick, Salvadore. . . .

We shall see by the slave names and perhaps even more so by freedmen's names how and to what extent these colonial designations were to be perpetuated in Haitian lineages.

Most often, the slave, once freed, divested himself of all the names, surnames, and double names he bore, African or colonial, to adopt most frequently the name of his former master or else the first name of a white. It was especially through the newly liberated slaves that we have held on to French colonial names, such license having been forbidden the enfranchised



during the entire colonization period, except for certain rather rare cases of legitimate birth or, more common, of parental recognition.

Because of this restriction, slaves, once freed, tended to adopt as family names the given names they had borne in slavery, whence the multiplicity of first names designating Haitian families. As for the purely African name, the newly freed slave dropped it with alacrity. Was he tempted more often than not to establish his personality and his new status by presenting himself in his new life with a solid French name, more suitable from his point of view for marking his elevation and for symbolizing with legitimate vanity both satisfaction and prestige?

Thus, very few African names have survived. We know the name Baguidi<sup>121</sup> which is Dahomean, with a mother branch still extant in Arada country. It is not certain that the numerous slaves named Couacou in Saint-Domingue were at the origin of the family name Coicou.<sup>122</sup> In any case, this name is very rare in France, and is never found among colonial names in Saint-Domingue. Neither is it known for a certainty whether the word *dossou* (male child born after twins) served to provide the family name Dossous.

Even the creole names have disappeared. For example: Bouqué, Coucouille, Grandgoût, Sans-Quartier, Papayer,<sup>123</sup> Patate, Callebasse, which were slave names, or again Mabial which became, in popular parlance, a synonym for malice because of the terror generated by leaders bearing this family or first name during the Haitian period.

#### NOTES, pp. 113-185

1. *Revue d'Histoire des Colonies*, No. 135, 3rd trimester 1951, p. 310.
2. We even find them among the Maroons (*Affiches Américaines* of 10 December 1789, for example, *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, 13 March 1791, or again the *Courier national de Saint-Domingue* of 6 March and 31 July 1791. As for Mozambiques they were present in increasingly important groups from 1773 on.
3. Robert Cornevin, *Histoire de l'Afrique*, Tome 11, 273.
4. "Evolution historique d'une religion africaine: Voodoo." Paper presented by Lilas Desquiron de Heusch at the Free University of Brussels for the academic year 1967-1968.
5. See Monseigneur Cuvelier's translation in *L'Ancien Royaume du Congo*, of the chant "*Hé bomba, bafio canga té . . .*" cited by Price Mars in *Ainsi parla l'oncle*.
6. Texts taken from *La Tradition Voodoo et le Voodoo haïtien*. The interpretations of Mars, Maximilien, Dorsainvil, Métraux, Marcelin, and Desquiron differ little on this point of view.
7. "In Haiti in contrast with Brazil there are no cults segregated according to ethnic grouping. Voodoo welcomes to its bosom and unifies in a single structure all the richness of the different cultures which have nourished it."  
The statement is by Lilas Desquiron (*op. cit.*, I) who adds: "The Dahomeans gave Voodoo its general framework, its structure; on the other hand the Bantus of Central Africa have pulled together (*recueilli*) this fundamental impulsion, have enriched and transformed it, in short have been the most considerable tributary of the Dahomean source."
8. Saint-Méry, I, 55.
9. It is to the Angolan neighbors of the Congos we owe the habit of considering it

the most grave insult "to swear on the godmother or mother of a negro" while invoking "the sexual organs." Saint-Méry, I, 55.

10. Quiola, in Tanzania, East Africa, a small island presently known as Kiolua.
11. See Saint-Méry, I, 52ff. and Mme. Rosselline Siguret—"Esclaves . . . au quartier de Jacmel," *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre Mer*, 1968, No. 2, p. 224.
12. Although the origin of slave ships was usually given, the newspapers often failed to indicate the number of captives composing each shipment so that the number of slaves declared does not from one year to another correspond to the number of *bois d'ébène* imported. These figures may, all the same, reflect in general the predominance of one ethnic group or another in the populating of the colony.
13. Our figures on the number of Maroons will not always be rigorously precise. Rather, they will indicate for most of the following years an estimate. We did not always have the time necessary to avoid the risks of repeated announcements or of omissions of scattered, small news items not under captions usually reserved for slaves in flight, in jail, or on sale as strays. Whatever the case, our estimate will certainly approximate the exact number of Maroons declared each year despite the fact that technical difficulties have prevented us from achieving by our individual energies the success of a group effort.
14. First description of an importation of slaves from East Africa. From that time Africans from Madagascar and especially those from Mozambique would grow in number. *S.A.A.*, 24 July 1773, shipment unloaded the eighteenth of the same month. In spite of the difficulties encountered by the slave trade in this region, the Gold Coast and the Angola Coast were often rejected in favor of Quiola and other slave centers in East Africa.
15. Guineans and Bantus being equally represented in the listed origin of the shipments, it was necessary in this special case to include their numbers in the list of Africans declared. Of the 7965 Africans declared, more than half are listed as having come from the Angola coast.
16. Although the Mozambiques belong to the Bantu group we have listed them separately in order to suggest the periodic contribution of the Mozambiques in addition to the Angolans and the Congos of the same group.
17. Sierra-Leone.
18. Of the 202 Africans in this shipment, seven fled into marronage shortly afterwards. "In marronage seven newly arrived Mandingo slaves, without brand, a part of the sale from the slave ship captured from enemies of the State during the early days of last month; they fled the plantation of M. Saint-Marie at Borgne during the night hours between the sixteenth and seventeenth."
19. This cargo is listed as "from the Guinea Coast," but, at the time of sale, the same group is described as "slaves from the Gold Coast." In the same way, we will correct statistics which reflect errors in the locality of certain ports or even of particular peoples so as to attribute them to their true groups in keeping with the principal objective of this summary table.
20. A table of slave-ship arrivals for the year 1784 was published in the *Affiches* in 1785. This table indicated eighty-two ships, a more or less identical figure but, on the other hand, compared with the 14,767 slaves offered for sale the same journal indicates 22,830 slaves traded, 3,578 of whom died during the crossing, thus reducing the actual importation of Africans in 1784 to 19,252. With respect to the census of Africans sold at Saint-Domingue in 1784, the table is limited to Cap and Port-au-Prince and omits the other slave ports—Saint-Marc, Léogâne, and so forth.
21. The same journal for the year in question published the following figures in a summary table. Number of ships, 65; number of slaves sold, 21,652. This time



- it is stated that the total for slaves traded refers to the ports of Port-au-Prince, Léogâne, Cayes, Saint-Marc and Jacmel.
22. The sum total of slaves imported in 1786 is 27,648—2,592 at Léogâne; 873 at Jacmel; 385 at Cayes; 2,014 at Saint-Marc; 12,319 at Cap; and 9,465 at Port-au-Prince. *A.A.*, 10 March 1787.
  23. Bryan Edwards gives the figure as 30,839 slaves imported in 1787. An additional nine, carried under the caption "other origins," are listed as four Mozambiques, four Gold Coast, one African coast.
  24. For the year 1788 Bryan Edwards cites the number of slaves imported as 29,506. At least two cargoes identified as "Angola Coast" came from Mozambique.
  25. Descriptions of slave ships for 1789 take into account arrivals at Cap, at Port-au-Prince, les Cayes, Jérémie, Jacmel, Léogâne, and Saint-Marc.
  26. The number of slave ships and slaves declared seems quite large. At Cap alone, for the period 14 to 19 October of this record year, seventeen slave ships were announced.
  27. These newspapers are to be found in the Moreau de Saint-Méry Library, dépôt R. C. du Fonds de la France d'Outre-Mer.
  28. Contraband trading was to continue yet a little longer. During the last brief period the supply was to come, for the most part, from the neighboring islands. The slave trade would end as it began with relays from nearby islands as with the first remote operations before the founding of the West India Company in 1664.
  29. The slave trade was abolished by the Convention of 27 July 1793, but still the Directory, on 13 March 1799, issued instructions to Blanchot de Verly, commandant at Sénégal, to try "to engage the blacks by the lure of liberty, by persuasion, and with the promise of a happier fate—or to regard as ransom the objects of exchange given as payment for a slave—" The fulsome letter was reproduced by Saintoyant in *La colonisation française*, I, 335.
  30. It should be noted that "metif, metive," according to Father Labat, referred particularly to crossbreeding with Indians, the term "mixed blood" being more often used for other combinations.
  31. Moreau de Saint-Méry, I, 89-95.
  32. Sténio Vincent, *En posant les jalons*, I, pp. 152-153.
  33. There is a long list of creoles from Martinique, Guadeloupe, Curaçao, Mississippi, and of Spanish-speaking creoles from the eastern part of Saint-Domingue, English, creoles from Havana, and so forth.
  34. See Jean Fouchard, *Langue et littérature des aborigènes d'Ayiti*.
  35. In certain parishes creole Africans dominated from the time of the revolution. They appeared in the majority in a few work gangs according to plantation inventories which, unfortunately, did not always, it seems, distinguish between creoles and creolized slaves admitted to creole ranks after an extended stay in the colony. There was a tendency in colonial practice to disregard the African origins of old slaves and to identify them with born creoles. Whatever the case, and in spite of this "practice" extended also to some whites long enough in the colony to be called Saint-Domingue creole, the conclusions to be drawn from work-gang inventories provide extremely significant data on the predominance of creole slaves at the close of the colonial period.
  36. Frédéric Marcelin: We are not freed of the heritage our masters left us and the robe of Nessus resting on our shoulders is unfortunately but a weave of cocoanut fibers."

J. C. Dorsainvil: "As much as 80 percent of the Haitian people are a product of miscegenation. In the Haitian type rarely does one observe in their original purity the dominant physical characteristics of the black race which contributes

in large measure to its formation. For the black race this *metisage* had already begun in that part of the world (Africa)."

Jacques Stephen Alexis: "African, Latin-American and Haitian in the very marrow of my bones, I am the product of several races and civilizations. First of all and above all, closer to Africa I am nonetheless heir to the Carib and the American Indian by virtue of a secret flow of blood and because of cultures surviving long after their deaths. Similarly, I am in good measure the heir of old Europe, of Spain, and especially of France. These last two are evident in my thinking, in my emotional actions as undeniably they are in my sensibilities. . . . I relate to the French way of thinking and to French sensibilities and so much has France given me I am under obligation to pay back what little I have to offer. . . ."

And finally, should it be necessary, let us add the now classic lesson of ethnology: "The notion of 'pure race' is an illusion of the last century. Paleontology, genetics, and molecular biology have relegated it to worthlessness. All human beings derive from a very small ancestral group of mutants. So-called races are only the result of a classification simplified into large groupings of microraces which have been in continued evolution since the birth of man. All the races we presently identify are destined, like all things pertaining to man, to change completely."—R. C.

37. Some rare brands indicated only a place name. From then on they seem to have been useless. For example, a slave is branded "Cul de Sac"; others "Jacmel" or "Colon au Cap." In rare instances and only before 1780 creole slaves carried only the brand "born in Léogâne," "born in Cayes," no doubt to indicate that they were actually creole born and not creolized slaves admitted to creole ranks, as was often the case.
38. *A.A.*, 2 June 1784.
39. *S.A.A.*, 1 February 1783 and 24 April 1791.
40. *A.A.*, 30 April 1785.
41. *Nouvelles diverses*, No. XLI, 20 May 1789.
42. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, 22 October 1791. Minutes of the morning meeting of 15 September.
43. *Moniteur général de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue*, No. 26, May 1793. The proclamation, in Creole, of Polvérel and Sonthonax. Let us note here and now that the word "Maroon" is used to the end of the colonial period.
44. Labat, 71. Branding was largely by hot iron but slightly different in Africa where it was practiced, just as many "nations" still practice in our time excision of women, or display distinctive tribal markings on the cheeks, forehead and teeth, purple their gums, pierce their nostrils, and so forth.
45. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, 29 January 1791, the case of a pregnant Bassa whom her owner, Laprée de Saint-Marc "did not, given her condition, think it wise to brand." Also in *A.A.*, 7 August 1769, "a griffe slave's brand on the left breast illegible because of swollen flesh."
46. Very rarely was a dye brand described, for example (*S.A.A.*, 22 January 1774) the case of Augustin, a Mandingo slave, "branded with ink, the brand slightly worn off." Or, in 1791, of one or two slaves "ink branded."
47. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, 12 March 1791, *S.A.A.*, 4 March 1775, and *Feuille du Cap*, 1791.
48. *S.A.A.*, 25 February 1784. Slaves on the plantation of the Dominicans carry the brand F.P. [Frères Prêcheurs]. We find Maroons with this brand who ran away from the mission in Léogâne.
49. It should be noted that branding, especially with the fleur-de-lys, was a common



- form of punishment. It was used against criminals, no doubt to discourage escapes.
50. The first advertisements beginning with 1764 mention "incised national markings." These were of course the same "marks" that will continue to be noted right to the end of the colonial period.
  51. Saint-Méry, I, 51.
  52. *A.A.*, 2 April 1783.
  53. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, 9 February 1791.
  54. For example, we note "a very black Congo" offered for sale. *Avis divers et Petites Affiches Américaines*, 23 January 1765.
  55. Rarely, "a light-skinned Guinean woman, thick lips, very broad nose" or "a negro who could easily be taken for mulatto," or that other expression *mulatto bazané* (brownish mulatto") used in 1789.
  56. Their beauty was at times described as "Flat nose, beautiful teeth, pretty smiles, well-built, firm breasts."
  57. The *grimaud* or *grimelle* type so current today is creole, born of mixed crossings.
  58. Father Dutertre, 11, 495.
  59. There are descriptions of slaves "with hair close cut" (an Arada branded Trouillot) or "hair recently cut close" (an Ibo, in Jérémie). This appears to be a colonial practice. As late as 1791 there was the term hair cut *en couronne* or close to the scalp.
  60. *S.A.A.*, 17 January 1784.
  61. Saint-Méry, I, p. 53.
  62. The case is described by P. de Vaissière, p. 194 (*Notes historiques de Saint-Méry*). It is not claimed that this colonist ate the flesh he bit off.
  63. "A vice that distressed the black women" says Saint-Méry with considerable modesty.
  64. A *cachimbo* is a pipe. This ad is from *S.A.A.*, 27 February 1781.
  65. See Father Nicolson: *Essai sur l'Histoire naturelle de Saint-Domingue*. The coffee plant was brought in from Martinique in 1727. In 1784 (*A.A.*, 21 January 1784) De Bellecombe introduced from the French islands and from Bourbon and India "ten mango trees, a vetiver root, sixty seeds of the sago tree, some Moluques (a palm tree), fifteen strawberry plants from Manilla, three spiny bamboo plants, thirteen mulberry plants from Madagascar, eight camphor tree cuttings, etc."
  66. A last miracle fruit, the breadfruit, was first brought to the island in 1789. The first plants were entrusted to Delin de Villeneuve of Bas-Limbé in August 1788 (*Nouvelles diverses* of 31 January 1789). We do not know when the variety known as *arbre-véritable* was introduced.
  67. *A.A.*, 11 September 1784.
  68. At the time of the earthquake of 3 June 1770, the advertisements declared only a single case of a Maroon having escaped from prison in Port-au-Prince.
  69. Letter of Marie Labry à propos a storm that had ravaged the Cayes district: "We still don't have any garden staples to feed the slaves. We are reduced to giving them grain." See Charles Frostin, "Angevins de modeste condition établis à Saint-Domingue," in *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer*, T. LVII (1790) No. 209.
  70. No. 34 of Thursday 26 April 1792.
  71. *Moniteur Général*, 16 November 1792.
  72. *Journal de l'Assemblée Provinciale de la Partie du Nord de Saint-Domingue*, Session of 1 December 1789.
  73. Those in jail, those on sale as strays, those returned to the work gangs on their own initiative, those captured in manhunts, etc. We do not have all the data.
  74. *S.A.A.*, 20 February 1781 and May 1781.

75. *Ibid.*, 16, 18 February, 8 April 1793.
76. *Moniteur Général*, 16 November 1792.
77. *Ibid.*, 15 May 1792. Curiously enough in Paris during the same period there were associations of house-servants protesting the presence in France of all people of color.
78. *Journal du Port-au-Prince*, 25 September 1791.
79. *Gazette des Cayes*, No. 33, 22 April 1792.
80. *A.A.*, 24 September 1783. In the sales announcements on one or two occasions there was the offer of "a blind slave used to turn the millstone." *A.A.*, 12 December 1780.
81. Leprosy. The cases are quite rare.
82. *S.A.A.*, 14 July 1784.
83. *A.A.*, 2 August 1775.
84. To be noted is the multiplicity of descriptions of slaves "with two upper front teeth missing." This indication is repeated hundreds of times.
85. Another case: "A Congo slave wet nurse, twenty years old with a little boy of six months. Has been in the country six months." *A.A.*, November 1786.
86. *S.A.A.*, 23 June 1784. There are few known cases of this type (unsuccessful suicide). As for successful suicides their number, it has already been seen, remains high, especially among the Ibos.
87. *A.A.*, 14, 17 May, and 18 June 1783.
88. In Saint-Domingue the measles is called *sarampion*.
89. *A.A.*, 1 October 1783.
90. *A.A.*, 29 April 1786.
91. The expression *gravé verrette* has passed into contemporary language in Haiti where they still speak of "Salomon's pox" in allusion to the epidemic that claimed many victims during the administration of this upright and progressive man. The last epidemic occurred in the 20s. At that time the people sang "*Aero-plane—la, li sôti Cuba, li poté nouvelle toutes fanmes pou vaccin.*" [The aeroplane came from Cuba bringing the news that every woman must be vaccinated].
92. Robert Cornevin, *Histoire du Congo-Léo*, p. 36.
93. Saint-Méry, I, pp. 250, 522.
94. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, 22 January 1791.
95. Around 1764 "the word was more popularly *cicatrisé*; after 1780 *haché* and *taillé*."
96. *S.A.A.*, 19 January 1785.
97. *A.A.*, 15 May 1771.
98. *Documentos para la Historia de Haití*: items 548 and ff.
99. According to an interested Saint Domingue collector, some of these papers disappeared during the last war.
100. Note that following the example of the colonials at the time of their savage massacres in the southern parishes freedman used "huge attack dogs to hunt down whites hiding out in the hills and woods."—Madiou I, 139. Of all the vengeful actions these massacres were the most bloody since the freedman were by far the majority in such southern parishes as St. Michel, Fond des Nègres, Aquin, Tiburon, Côteaux Baynet, Cayes, Jacmel. . . . Of Rochambeau, General LeClerc already mortally ill in May 1802 wrote to the First Consul: "There is no one better suited to replace me than General Rochambeau. He is an honorable man, an excellent soldier, and he dislikes blacks. . . ."
101. Another slave, newly arrived, twenty years old, six feet tall, found in Petit Goâve in February 1791.
102. The Arawaks were "a bit under average height, seldom exceeding five feet six inches." Daniel Brinton: *La Raza Americana*, translated by Perry, 223.



103. Dr. J. B. Romain, *Introduction à Anthropologie physique des Haïtiens*, Port-au-Prince, 1962, p. 117.
104. S.A.A., 5 November 1783. According to Moreau de Saint Méry (I, 522), "The list of octogenarians in every era would be brief . . . and rather more so for blacks and mulattoes. . . ." The freedman Aglon died at 110, Vincent-Olivier at 120. Marie-Madeleine, an Arada; Hélène Desle, and Jeanne are centenarians. Louis Bour, a quadroon, died at the age of 101, in Borgne. Among the mulattoes, one can cite Thomas Bernard, more than eighty years old or, among the colonists, Michel Bouchet, dead at eighty-four in Jérémie, according to Michael Recourt. In 1768 Marie Savane, a free person, died at Anse-à-Veau at the age of 114, still perfectly lucid, and François Nicas, a free griffonne, died the following year at the age of 120, survived by a daughter age eighty. At the Convention meeting of 4 June 1793, Abbé Grégoire presented to the assembly, which rose to its feet "in respectful homage to age," a woman of color, Jeanne Odo from Port-au-Prince, age 114 years. A free mulatto, Jean Favereau, from Trou, died at the age of 110 in 1765.
105. S.A.A., 20 October and 15 December 1784.
106. S.A.A., 6 October 1784. In the same month, André, a slave rented out to Madam Champillan and property of Chéron the engineer at Port-au-Prince, is described. "For two months he has been in the king's jail without being reclaimed by anyone."
107. Colonies C 9B 35, Pièce No. 7, Dossier Administration Générale, National Archives, Paris. Is it really known whether at the time of the peace treaty all the Bahoruco Maroons had surrendered or whether some of them merely pretended to do so? Besides what were the available means to control, in those steeply sloped gorges, these scattered bands and the range of a population which for all of a century had consistently increased—multiplied in these retreats through recruits and births.
108. In addition women organized their own Maroon group for women only. "Four Negresses of the same nation Marie, Marianne, Cécile, and Nanette (the latter taking along her five-month-old daughter) have fled from the Bigot plantation (Gonaïves). A.A., 17 August 1769.
109. Celebrated heroine of the Haitian War of Independence who followed her husband, General Lamartinière in the battle of Crête à Pierrot.
110. See Gabriel Debien, *Les origines des esclaves des Antilles*.
111. The same practice was observed for plantation cows and mules entered on inventories with names such as "Charlotte, Trompeuse, Franchon, Geneviève, Dauphine, Brillant, Bijou." See P. Léon, *Les Dolle et les Raby* (Inventaire d'une habitation à la marmelade), p. 185.
112. The "Dieu" derivatives are not slave inventions. They had little choice in the names they bore. Mention is made of a St. Marc colonist named Dieulefils [God the son]. These derivatives are still very common in the Haitian countryside as Bois derivatives are in the cities: Boisrond, Boisvert, Boigris, Diambois, Boissette, Boissaubin, Jolibois, Boily, Boileau and others, all of French origin.
113. Among the slaves of Merceron in Plaine du Cul-de-Sac. There was a slave ship *Le Merceron*.
114. *Catin* was a diminutive of Catherine and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not have its present pejorative sense. In 1780 advertisements we find "the slave Catherine, surnamed Catin."
115. There was a Cayes colonist named Sanon, also a free mulatto.
116. Michel Brédy, N.L., was a mason in the Nippes quarter. A.A., 15 October 1766.
117. Name often carried by slaves from the British Antilles.
118. A distortion of *Sosso* or of the African canton *zozeau*? This Creole word desig-

- nates the male sex. The female is designated by a word deriving from the Provençal *coco* (*cocoun*) meaning shell.
119. While Bouqui was a common name, Malice appeared only once, in 1776.
  120. Likewise "Vincent called Bissinthe, a maroon from Cap, branded St. Pé." His master was a confectioner on Penthievre St. Two months after his escape, the Maroon Bissinthe was back in the Port-au-Prince jail. *A.A.*, 27 April and 29 June 1779. As for St. Pé, several years later he was still selling pills, Verdun anise, pastilles, and candy.
  121. In 1775, among the Maroons of Gros-Morne, a black creole coachman named Jean-Baptiste Baguedy, called Couneau.
  122. The name was spelled this way in 1770 for a Mina slave but hundreds of slaves were named Couacou.
  123. Is it the origin of the family name Papailler?



# V

## THE MASTERS AS VICTIMS OF MARRONAGE

## Names of the Colonial Whites

THE NAMES of colonial whites appearing in the Saint-Domingue newspapers are representative in their diversity. First there are the proper names associated with the large plantations even when the owners living in France had entrusted their interests to an agent or manager, then those of the administrators or plantation caretakers. Also, there were the names of creolized colonials and of functionaries, ecclesiastics, surgeons, those in active military service, magistrates and, last, the poor whites engaged in a wide variety of jobs—boilermakers, shoemakers, goldsmiths, carpenters, cabinetmakers, masons, merchants, tailors, barbers, bakers, innkeepers, vendors, and the rest. Thus, scattered throughout, one comes across the great names associated with Saint-Domingue such as Ségur, Noailles, Chabannes, Gouy d'Arcy, Lévis, La Rochefoucauld, de Paphy; de Charlotte, Chateamorand, Chastenoie, de la Ferronays, d'Estaing, d'Argout, Prince de Rohan and others representing great French families, nobles, or high bourgeoisie, who lived in the colony for many years or who founded families there. Among these were Gallifet, Vaudreuil, Duclos, Garesché, Foäche, d'Espinose, the Mardochée Mendès-France, all long established names in Petit-Goâve.<sup>1</sup> Too, there were the descendants of great names in France of whom it was said they apportioned their lives "between a bowl of rum and a black concubine"—a Vaudreuil, a Chateaneuf, a Boucicaud. Of the colonists who, unlike the visitors in great haste to make a fortune and get out, lived in close contact with their work force, we find the families Bizoton, who arrived in 1716, the Pivers of Saint-Marc,<sup>2</sup> the Dignerion and Chateaublond, and the Pays de Bourjolly family from La Rochelle or Anjou, settlers in Léogâne since the earliest days of the colony. Their descendants Claude-Jean and Henri-Alexandre are originators of the branches issuing from their marriage with the sisters Hayo: Grandmaison, Epimache and Louis-René Le Pays de Bourjolly, ancestors of a Haitian family, the Bourjollys emigrated to the South with a branch in Port-au-Prince. The old Count de Lugé from Saint-Marc's parish, who was almost eighty years old when he died in the arms of a young servant girl of twenty named Fillette—according to Placide David, and Annette according to Laujon, left three-quarters of his estate to this adored mulatto woman with whom he shared his last days in the shade of that extraordinary ancillary idyll.



The Rossignols de Lachicotte, through marriages, founded the biggest and richest family in the colony<sup>3</sup> incessantly multiplying in Descaheux-Grandmont. He was survived by ten children—Arcueil Dulagon, who had nine children; Leclarc des Dunes, who had “at least eleven children,” Poincy the youngest, leaving behind eight illegitimate children in addition to children from the Rossignol, Desdunes and Vieux families. White colonists married black women mostly for convenience, such as Saint Martin of Artibonite who married an Arada woman with a dowry of 150 thousand francs in rents and a number of slaves, the great majority of whose deaths he caused by atrocities “even going so far as emasculation”; Gasparol Dumesny, who married an old black widow of seventy-two; she was free and “heiress to an estate worth a million”;<sup>4</sup> Bridou, who had no reservations about marrying Charlotte Desvarieux, an amiable and accessible black woman of questionable virtue who had amassed four hundred thousand francs running a brothel.<sup>5</sup>

These legitimized alliances with black or light-skinned women were not viewed simply as good investments. From the earliest days there were creolized colonists who were drawn to the sensual pleasures of the tropics. As early as 1688 Governor de Cussy became alarmed at the registration of “twenty marriages of colonists with mulatto or black women within a four-months period.” The legal proscription against such alliances was not strictly enforced in Saint-Domingue<sup>6</sup> during any period of colonial life. Nevertheless, legitimate unions between white men and black women, however much practiced, were limited and frowned upon. There are examples of long-lasting liaisons between colonists and slaves ending in marriage. Many colonists must have followed the example of François de la Rochelle who, at forty-eight years of age, married his fifty-four-year-old Arada slave and mother of his four children, or of René de la Bernadière, a native of Quimperlé who, on 19 October 1774 married his Mandingo slave and with the same act, which took place in Cayes du Fond, legitimized five children born of the union. The eldest was already thirty-three and the others twenty-eight, seventeen, fifteen and eleven.<sup>7</sup> The Code Noir did not forbid marriages between whites and blacks, provided that the white was a bachelor. Nevertheless, authorization was sometimes denied the black woman.

Petty administrative annoyances served to snuff out many proposed marriages and the tenuous yet real reprisals against mixed couples posed a threat and in certain striking examples must have resulted in intimidation or deterrence. In 1762 Mr. Guérin, a wealthy resident of Jacmel, was removed from his post as churchwarden of his parish for this very reason. One Boldy, a captain of dragoons in the Port-au-Prince regiment, was denied promotion because of his marriage to a black woman. Similarly, there was Le Bréphon, of Jacmel, whose grandmother was reputedly a black woman from Madagascar. In 1771, a Chapuzet was rejected for officer's rank in the militia because his great great-grandmother was a black woman from St. Kitts. The king refused to examine the titles of nobility of two whites married

to mulatto women.<sup>8</sup> The king treated the matter with formality. A letter from his minister dated 27 May 1771 addressed to the administration at Saint-Domingue declared: "It is His Majesty's desire that under no pretext are you to approve marriages between whites and women of mixed blood. . . ."

Briefly, the proscriptions, reprisals, and scorn, of which the "misallied" were victims, do not seem to have been common throughout the colony.<sup>9</sup> It is especially in the North that this kind of discrimination is practiced. In spite of the examples drawn from Jacmel, the Southwest, like many of the parishes in the South, always reflected a crossing of black-white lines through marriages between whites and freed blacks. Clearly the whites exercised a common policy, subtle though apparent, shifting and opportunistic, of limiting as much as possible the threat to the balance of power represented by the growth, even the skin coloring of the class of freedmen.

It was a policy supported by the administration, dictated from Paris, deliberately and tacitly accepted by all the colonists. We will pay particular attention to this question. . . . In any case it is more by recognition and the legitimizing of bastards than by marriages that names of colonists were adopted by freedmen. In one way or another, this use of legal expedient was perforce restricted. On the other hand, it was the rare colonist, married or single, who did not signal out from field workers or domestic slaves an ardent light-skinned woman or seductive Arada or Congo woman to share his bed. It was a custom which was not out of tune with the generalized dissoluteness of the time. Ninety-five percent, if not more, of the light-skinned offspring resulting from these liaisons were for this reason illegitimate, were given their freedom or brought up with care in the colony or in France, protected from birth against the scandalous sales of "a mother with a mulatto baby at her breast."

These illegitimate children advanced economically and educationally. Together with the free blacks, they would form a class of freedmen called "people of color." We will focus on them, too, in our search for names still persisting in Haiti and for the purpose of indicating their situation in the colony.

To get back to the white colonists, the long list of names presented below was, with this in mind, taken at random from the examination of Saint-Domingue newspapers. They could be made complete with lists spread across five volumes of *Indemnités de Saint-Domingue*, but the mere enumeration of them would be beyond the scope of this work.<sup>10</sup> Those found in the advertisements and sufficient for emphasizing the importance of the colonial heritage in the Haitian patrimony are as follows:

Artaud, Alexis, Jacques and Claude Aubourg,<sup>11</sup> businessmen in Dondon and at Cap; Pierre Astier Junior (Grand Anse), Amblard, Pierre Aubry (Gonaïves), Jacques Baillergeau, Pierre Basile, Port-au-Prince; Bayard (Jérémie), Antoine Blot from Les Cayes, Bonhomme, Petit-Goâve resident; Charlot, a Cap innkeeper; Beauxpains of Nantes; Pierre François Covin;



the widow Chatelin at Gonaïves (it is also written Chatelain);<sup>12</sup> Mathieu Constant at Port-Margot (originally from Martiques in Provence), Chevalier; J. B. Duquayla<sup>13</sup> (originally from Raquefort), Deronseray<sup>14</sup> Dessources (Gonaïves), Antoine Darbouze (Torbec), Marianne Duchesne, Julie Desmarais of Jérémie, Durocher; the Estèves brothers, Port-au-Prince clock-makers; Fouché, Fouchard, the best known settled in Saint-Marc on the plantation bearing his name; Godefroy, a ship's captain from le Havre, Guérin, Gaillard, Geneviève Guérin, Gaudin, Hilaire, Hyppolite; Hudicourt,<sup>15</sup> Jumel, Lamothe, the widow Lalue, resident in Bellevue (it is also written Lalau), three leagues from Port-au-Prince, proprietor of thirty-two carreaux of land in coffee and linked with Saint-Jacques, a businessman in Port-au-Prince; J. B. Laforest, of Bordeaux; Lescot, Marie Lavache, François Lavaud,<sup>16</sup> Massac, Moreau; a surgeon Lespinasse in Port-au-Prince,<sup>17</sup> Mathon de Brotte (in Baraderès),<sup>18</sup> Daniel Monsanto, Cap businessman, Louis de Malleval, procurator at Saint-Louis; Claude Martineau, squire and captain of dragoons in France, train-bearer to Mme. Elizabeth, the king's sister, and living in the Cavaillon<sup>19</sup> sector; Nadal, a Cap businessman, on rue Espagnole,<sup>20</sup> Paret, Jacob Pereyra,<sup>21</sup> Périgord, mason at Cap; Dominique Pradel, the Widow Petit, Cap crockery merchant; Mme. de Raymond, Séjourné, father and son (Jérémie).<sup>22</sup> Vital, Viaud, Vorbe, a miller in Cap, Father Zéphirin in Cap.

To complete the listing we would need to add many rather funny colonial names which with their awkward associations have not been popularly traced in lineages: Cigogne [Stork], Dombriel, Cochon<sup>23</sup> [Pig] from Margot,\* Mazette [Gutless], Vivaroit [from Viviers], Bijou [Jewel], Baudet [Jack-ass], Bourreau [Hangman], Chameau [Camel], Roucou [Red], Charbon [Charcoal], Léchappé [the Fugitive], Chapeau, Pain, Patissier [Pastry cook], Chalumeau [Torch], Grand Bassin, Laymant [Lover], Mafaulie [My folly], Maron, and others that tempt a smile. Equally so the nobility created by Christophe and invested with Dukes of Marmelade or Lemonade (Limonade), laughed at by people who forgot the House of Orange or the Dukes of Foix [Liver] and Vaux [Veal] and Bishop Cauchon.

The fact is that all the Haitian families that kept these names did not acquire them by right of birth. Their appropriation was due more to the initiative of slaves at the time of the general proclamation of liberty than to the initiative of the recognized legitimate or legitimized freedmen who only rarely were able to hold on to the names of their white fathers.

A more interesting fact is that we can see families, originally black, becoming mulatto or, again, descendants of enfranchised mulattoes ending up as black families. For example, Laurent and Jacques Jumel, longtime freedmen in the Saint-Marc region and descendants of the colonists Jumel,<sup>24</sup> were the ancestors of a black family. In the same parish the slave Jean-Pierre would adopt and keep the name of the plantation on Saint-Marc heights, which is the name with which he was branded.<sup>25</sup> This black was, through his



son Cadestin and grandson Cadet Fouchard, both black, in direct line the ancestor of a family now mulatto. The Estimés of Verrettes are direct descendants of the French colonist Beausoleil, although the name was also carried by a Maroon of the Bambara people who was "a cigar maker, property of Mme. Fizelier," and by another slave, a Nago turned Maroon at Saint-Marc in 1783.

Other examples were the Bonshomme, some of whom were described as being "very light-skinned mulattoes" or white, functionaries in Petit-Goâve; the Desdunes, the Rémis, Viauds, Bazins, the Bellegardes, the Bernards, the Latortues, Raymonds, Fourcands, and others, changing skin color or giving rise over the generations, to a double branch either black or light-skinned.

Also known are the descendants of the Duval-Monville family, proprietors both at Saint-Domingue and Martinique where they had retired before the Revolution, at the same time as the Villarson family from Torbeck (Count Cullon de Villarson) and the Langlades from Mirebalais. A Jean-Marie Duval appeared to be strongly linked with the free mulattoes of Port Royal from 1763 on.<sup>26</sup> Other members of the Duval family settled in Port-au-Prince in 1791 and were proprietors of a plantation in the plain of Cul-de-Sac. The mulatto Duval-Monville Salomon was a resident of les Cayes. . . .

These are but a few examples. They could be enlarged upon in a projection on the present composition of the Haitian elite by a survey of the skin colors of the intermediate class known as freedmen in the thousands of bills of sale, birth and death notices, wills and gifts which comprise the rich collections still conserved in the "Minutes des notaires de Saint-Domingue" and in parochial registers.<sup>27</sup> Certainly, this would be an enormous task exceeding the energies and the lifespan of a single researcher interested in unearthing these details on color—a task which could only be characterized as an extravagant fantasy to be proposed to a harebrained idler or a maniac. . . .

If Moreau de Saint-Méry, fond of these kinds of games, were alive today, he would find it quite difficult to unravel from the entangled crossovers either the origins from the "coffee side" or the "ebony side" of many of the bourgeois families in Haiti. In the absence of a methodic analysis of the notary records of Saint-Domingue from the end of the colonial period, and relying only on the known physical characteristics or still extant traditions about family origins, an inquiry conducted in so summary and imprecise a manner on the basis of a hundred genealogical trees could, nevertheless, provide suggestive if limited results. It is known that some black or mestizo families included white branches; witness the well-known case of the black woman Céssette Dumas of Guinaudée at the root of that prodigious Dumas trilogy, or, in the Bordeaux area, the direct descendants of Placide Louverture, showing not the slightest trace of the African blood at their roots.<sup>28</sup> These are exceptional cases and not to be taken into account, just as one would avoid the difficulties of a too-risky classification of certain griffes and



grimauds of both sexes straddling the ebony and the copper on the basis of their being either well off or poor.

To the contrary, if we adopt the middle road, what curious finds might there not be, all to the bewilderment of those who sometimes try to give to details about skin color a sense, even the orientation, of a fallacious policy. Actually there are few Haitian bourgeois families, black or mixed bloods, which have remained without some admixture of these two rival complexions by one or another of their branches.

Of the dark-skinned families that have remained black, we can cite—with no chance of error?—the families Manigat,<sup>29</sup> Prophète, Pierre, Piquant, Saint-Lot, Désinor, Piquion, Nord Laguerre, and a few other members of the solid landed aristocracy of the North. And among those families of mixed blood that have continued this characteristic are the families Martineau, Desquiron, Théard, Roy, Thébaud, Rouzier, Blanchet, Chauvet, Auguste, or Liataud,<sup>30</sup> believed to be descendants of the heroic mulatto woman Marie Jeanne. But can it be certain that either of these families, characterized as “pure” black, or mixed-blood, if license may be taken with the term, actually remained so in all their branches from colonial times to ours? Was each branch sheltered against alliances and the hazards of crossing over so as to preserve that pretended original purity, as though it were a matter of zealously watching over some precious good, a maidenhood, perhaps a national flag?

And if by a freak of chance this were so, the gamble played out in the miracle of inviolable chromosomes would have been as strange and as singular as if this were deliberately willed. However that may be, the rather curious classifications resulting from the inquiry would in other respects suffice to expose the strange and vain nature of all questions of color in our infant bourgeoisie, puffed up with pretensions though born only yesterday. Who can pretend not to know that one has but to raise the lowest branches of our young genealogical plant to be certain of discovering a black Maroon with severed hamstrings or a crudely branded slave woman whom the master one night invited to share his couch? And then? What do village idiots talk about if not about windmills? Let us take a closer look at this ill-conceived deceit.

Among black families now for the most part light-skinned are the following: F. D. Légitime, L. F. Salomon, F. Armand, Cadestin Fouchard, P. Mears, E. Chancy, T. Béliard, V. Douyon, C. Zamor, Gal. Alerte, I. Jeanty.

Among mulatto families descended from white colonists and now black are Estimé, Jumel, Duval (Monville) Verret, Démesnin, Rosemond, Raymond, Vilgrain, Marlique, Loiseau, Boisvert, Lamy, Pierre Antoine, Alfred, Duviella, Baron, Baptiste. Families of mixed blood changing to black, now again to mixed blood are Desdunes, Beaubrun Vieux, Laraque, Tardieu, Hudicourt, Lavau, Canal.

Among the families of mixed blood having parallel branches, one black, one mixed blood are the following:

|          |           |            |            |
|----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Rigaud   | Trouillot | Lespinasse | Laforet    |
| Hypolite | Vilaire   | Bourjolly  | Basquiat   |
| Bonhomme | Mathon    | Léger      | Boncy      |
| Brutus   | Geffrard  | Fourcand   | Villejoint |
| Lamothe  | Paul      | Bellegarde | Acacia     |
| Laroche  |           | Delatour   | Sylvain    |

In conclusion we note that from one generation to another constant skin color is extremely rare; more often there is a mixing and a continuous changing back and forth from copper to ebony and vice versa, so much so that it is logical to believe that "the color question" would be the loser if this tendency were to continue to hold over a few decades, accentuating the ironic game of the chromosomes. At least the ridiculousness and inconsistency of color would be made clear. Certainly mestizo families of black origin would be most often mixed by alliances with white men or generally white women. The majority of mulatto women of earlier days were inimical to such unions. Perhaps in our time education or the hazards of heritage, economic conditions and contacts with the outside world will lead our young sisters to less rigid conceptions.

If these alliances—legitimate, of course—between copper and ebony were, and still are, rare the cause must be sought in the colonial mentality and the complex about seeking skin color closer to the white, a complex perpetuated and crystallized as an aesthetic standard even in the country areas where it is expressed in terms of "red Negro" or "Negro woman with long hair."<sup>31</sup> This fact is important for making clear the persistence and the extent of these peculiar expressions of the colonial mentality. For instance, it is a common experience to hear issuing from the lips of peasants, and not without some pride, the claim that "great grandfather was a Negro with beautiful red color, and his mother a griffonne with silken hair. . . ."

This colonial complex is particularly highlighted in Voodoo in which we find deities (*loas*) linked with white, Catholic counterparts: Legba—St. Peter or St. Anthony; Damballah—St. Patrick; Chango—St. John; Loko—St. Joseph; Ogou—Ferraille (St. James the Elder), all of them in attendance on black Zaka, the Creole-speaking peasant keeper of the gardens wearing his dark blue blouse while accepting as an offering a drink of anise-flavored rum with some *mais moulu*.<sup>†</sup> Sometimes they adopted the form of long-haired light-skinned men and women speaking perfect French and demanding chicken when not asking for rayon, silk materials, and champagne. Thus, Agoué (St. Ulrich) is a very light-skinned male with green eyes, and Erzilie, the most popular of Voodoo divinities, is represented as a light-skinned woman with a flowing head of hair, with an elegant bearing, French diction and who, because of color prejudice, shuns the advances of black-skinned Guedé-Nibo.<sup>32</sup>

It should be possible to illustrate this silly subracism by any number of



other examples drawn from the perfidious legacy of Saint-Domingue. However, the case of Pétion and the eldest daughter of the Emperor Dessalines, too often cited and quite erroneously so, must be excluded from these examples. It is regrettable that this political marriage, which would have served both as example and appeasement, never took place; but in all honesty it was not logical to expect Pétion to marry Célimène who at the time was the inamorata of the young and reckless Captain Chancy of the Toussaint-Louverture family. If the Emperor—a fair man and decent to the point of naiveté—did not know of the affair Pétion certainly did, for he and Chancy were the best of friends. Furthermore, Pétion, already opting for bachelor status<sup>33</sup> and personal freedom, had just a few months previously installed his new mistress, Joute Lachenais, the most alluring woman of the time, in an attractive little slate-covered house situated where the daily, *Le Matin*, is presently located, on Eugène Bourjolly Street.<sup>34</sup> In this case, was it that Pétion did not choose to honor himself by marrying the Emperor's daughter, or was it that Chancy chose to dishonor her?

It must be pointed out that the best way to eliminate subracism basically has always depended not on documenting inventories of skin color in terms of comparative lightness or darkness or in classifying hair as peppercorn or silken, or noses as aquiline or broad, but rather in guarding against a scandalous colonial inheritance, that is, that the lighter-skinned individuals, in addition to a color considered symbolically more favored, did possess if now they do not, a much larger proportion of the advantages of good fortune and education inherited from the old masters, principally in the West and the South, at the expense of the black bourgeois majority who, since 1946, have been rapidly catching up. In short, and especially to the extent that the scandalous exploitation by the new colonials is perpetuated, the virulent antagonism against the ruling propertied bourgeoisie will be brought into balance only by means of a fair distribution of the national wealth and not by some vulgar, indiscreet battle of the digestive tube and skin coloration.

The fact is that these complex data relating to the despicable appetites of a mere fraction of the population are of little significance when compared with the single, all important problem challenging the Haitian people. The problem is not one of tallying the dark and the light skinned among the bourgeoisie. The overriding need of the Haitians is for both these groups to purposefully link their destinies with that of the masses and to assist them in their struggle to rise out of their centuries-old poverty, ignorance, and marginal health. All the rest is but the sport of the self-indulgent. The need is for action.

Surely the masses will not wait indefinitely for our bicolored elite to decide on this rescue operation. The masses believe neither in Santa Claus nor in some hypothetical pelican's sacrifice of those dark and light-skinned Haitians who, for some three centuries, have learned only to play the role

of self-centered, exploiting freedmen. . . . Someday the hour of the masses shall strike—with or without us.

That is as it should be. . . .

Let us, however, after this long tangent generated by the subject, return to the subject of names once colonial now evolved as Haitian. It will be noted that the spelling of the colonial name, as it devolved or was assigned, was sometimes modified. Loubau would become Loubeau; Lalau, Laleau; the *s* would be dropped from Estèves; Mégy became Mégie; Chatelin almost always became Chatelain; Duquayla, Duguella; Pereyra, Pereira; Malleva, Malval; Cassignol, Cassagnol; Barrault, Barau; Belliard, Béliard; Heurteloup dropped the final *p*. The name Heurtelou was perpetuated by François Her-teloup, originally from Anjou, who died in Léogâne, willing certain benefices to his slave Marie Louise, mother of his two children.<sup>35</sup>

It is only in the most exceptional cases that a freedman or slave kept his former master's particle of nobility as did Clos de Mayenne, a free black in Mirebalais.<sup>36</sup> For example, de Mesmin of Léogâne would become Démes-min; des Dunes became Desdunes; des Brosses, Débrosse; du Verger, Du-vergé; d'Hanache,<sup>37</sup> Danache; des Sources, Dessources; de Renoncourt, Derenoncourt. . . .

Even so, some particles still seen in the names of freedmen during the colonial period would disappear with Independence. For example the free black Pierre d'Imba (Is the name French?) who, leading a company of free blacks from Cap, distinguished himself at the siege of Cartagena in 1697; the quadroon Marthe de Brache from Anse-à-Veau, a free mulatto woman Magdeleine de la Marnière, or the freedman Alexandre de Gand, the particle being dropped at the time of the Revolution to become Dégand, even though we earlier found some Dégand brothers, no particle, freedmen in Arcahaie in 1784. This, although the spelling Dégand was not adopted by the white colonials of that name before 1793. The name Dessalines could have come from Cuvert des Salines, a colonist in the North and a deputy from Quartier-Morin in 1791.<sup>38</sup>

With the Revolution, the *de*, *du*, and *des*, all particles denoting nobility, true or false, were prudently dropped. A certain Verdier complained on 10 October 1792 that he had been "surprised" to notice that "his name had been embellished with a *du*, and announced that his name was precisely Verdier."<sup>39</sup> The colonist Monereau Deligny "gives notice that with the Revolution he discarded and now once again unequivocally discards the name Deligny to be henceforth known and to sign his name only as Monnereau."<sup>40</sup>

For a better understanding of this phenomenon, let us briefly examine the names of freedmen. First of all, since they were forbidden in their new status to take the names of colonists, they frequently adopted first names, sometimes complimented with borrowed names having no connection with any former master or colonial plantation. Unquestionably, it is from the freedmen that we have inherited that plethora of first names<sup>41</sup> raised to the



importance of family names, such as: Jean-Pierre, Jean-Baptiste, Toussaint, César, Michel, Léveillé, Lajoie, Jolicoeur. It was the slaves who for the most part handed down to us names of white colonists, although many of them emerged in liberty with only a first name, since all the slaves on a given plantation could not have taken the same name, and since they did not care to take the name of some white man who had not been their master.

## Freedmen's Names

BLACK AND MULATTO masters were also the victims of marronage. Similarity in skin color did not always signify solidarity. In the colonial setting, free blacks and mulattoes possessed slaves and treated them in the colonial manner, that is to say, with the usual scorn and abuse, and with concern only for their own interests. The slaves ran away from them just as from the whites. Hence, the names of these freedmen appeared with increasing frequency in runaway-slave advertisements. In the Saint-Domingue press, names of freedmen proprietors always had to be preceded by "le nommé" or "la nommée" [one, the said] with the designations: Free Mulatto, Free Black, Free Quadroon, Free Griffe. When color was not indicated, the proprietor was, in contemporary terms and taking colonial prejudice into account, "on the ebony side, not on the copper."

The title "mister," or "madame" or "sir" was reserved for whites alone. This privilege was challenged by the insurgent freedmen at Croix des Bouquets. It was also the point of discussions at Pont-Vallière in the Croix-des-Bouquets Church, and finally at Widow Elisabeth Damien's plantation.<sup>42</sup> We have, in our modest personal collection two extremely rare brochures on the "Peace Treaty between the white citizens and the colored citizens" published by Barthélémy Press, Port-au-Prince. Article XIV reads as follows:

Distinctions such as the said, Free Negro, Free Mulatto, Free Quadroon, colored Citizens and others of this type shall be henceforth strictly forbidden and from now on the only designation used for all citizens of the colony shall be those used for whites.

In a ringing speech, the Mayor of Port-au-Prince highlighted in the following terms the happy accord which the Treaty of Damiens of 21 October 1791 brought to the long quarrel about titles:

Citizens of color, my friends, you are now free of this appellation: No longer is there any distinction, any difference. In the future all of us together will have but a single designation, that of citizens. . . .

This Concordat of Damiens proved to be a short-lived wish. Right up to the general Proclamation of Liberty they habitually continued to refer to blacks,



griffes, mulattoes and quadroons of the freedmen's class as "citizens of color" or "the said" Bérichon, Free Negro of Croix des Bouquets, "the said," or "one" Marianne Free Mulatress of Dondon. . . . Our examination of the Saint-Domingue newspapers turned up only a single exception. In the announcement of Jean-Baptiste La Pointe's departure for abroad in 1784, he is referred to as "Mister," but La Pointe was an exceptional case. This legendary griffe from Arcahayé<sup>43</sup> was more white than any of the colonists. Educated, bold and fearless, cruel and haughty, an unrepentant swashbuckler burning with ambition, he was a bloody and ferocious slaver completely without ideals. He had been brought up in France where his sister Olive was the friend of Fouché, received and coddled in the most fashionable salons, at Mme. Tallien's, and at Cambacérès'. He was to marry a relative of the latter. A defender of the Métropole's interests, he was consulted by Bonaparte and was, the next day, prepared to sell the colony to the English, provided that slavery would be maintained.<sup>44</sup> It is clear why this sinister person was able to cross the color line and have bestowed upon him, in a miserable solitude, the flattering title "Sire Jean-Baptiste La Pointe." Toward the end of the seventeenth century, in other newspaper items and elsewhere, in notary minutes and especially through courtesies probably handsomely paid for, a few freedmen, rare examples, were beginning to be accorded the title "mister."<sup>45</sup> These encroachments caused an outcry as evidenced in these corrosive reproaches addressed to the editor of the *Gazette de Saint-Domingue* on 21 May 1791:

Sir, you frequently make the same errors, shocking to the eyes and ears of the *Gazette's* readers. In the most recent issues you gave the Mulattoes the status of White men by calling them Mister. The said Perrié and Couillau are three Mulattoes. I give you this advice as a matter I believe beneficial to the entire colony.

The protest was published with extenuating editorial comment:

It is not possible to tell whether signatories living in Montrouis are White or Colored. We cannot avoid similar surprises but whenever informed we will always move quickly to anticipate their effect.

The ad in question was declared null and void and replaced by a new announcement concerning "the said Perrié, Sr., young Perrié and Couillau M. L., minors."

Names of freedmen can be found in notarized acts, parochial registers, and in the innumerable parish petitions. However, those supplied by runaway slave ads are fairly characteristic:

"Les nommés" Jacques Antoine, Free Mulatto, Fort Dauphin; Pierre Aubry, Pierre Angomard, Free Black; Adélaïde, Free Mulatress; Louis, called des

Rouleaux, well-known baker in Cap, who owned three houses; Babiche, Babitte M. L., of Croix-des-Bouquets; Bazille M. L., Louis-Charles Victoire Borno, Free Griffe from Mirebalais; Marie-Jeanne Besson N. L. of Caiemittes; Marguerite Colas called Maille, Free Black in Cap; Pierre Mathurin Cangé, M. L.; Chaviteau, M. L.; Charles, Free Quadroon in Mirebalais; Denne Cameron, M. L.; Terrier Rouge; Marie-Catherine Mercy called Dartigue Longue, Free Mestiza living in Cayes.<sup>46</sup> Dau, Free Mulatress from Léogâne; Cadet Déronville, M. L., in Les Verrettes; Jean-François Diaquoi, Free Black; Arcahaie, Durocher, M. L.; Dougé, Jr., N. L.; Suzanne, M. L.; Nanette, N. L.; Joseph-George, M. L.; Annette, M. L.; Charlotte, M. L., Mondieu, M. L.; Margot Sénégal, Free Negress of Boucassin; Magdelen Viau, Free Mulatress of Cap; Sanon, Free Mulatto of Cayes; Jasmin Lilavois, Joseph, M. L., of Jacmel; Jean-Louis, called Lafontant, N. L.; Jean, M. L., Jacmel; Joseph Lebrun, Sr., M. L., of Saint-Marc. Lebled, M. L., of Mirebalais; Pierre Leroy, G. L., Laurent, Q. L., from Grande Rivière du Nord; Latortue, N. L., in Rivière Salée; Alexandre Legrand, N. L.; Jérémie, Salenave, M. L., of Artibonite; Madeleine Toulouse, Jacques Manon, Viaud, M. L., a fisherman; Louis, M. L.; Coucoute, Free Negress; Marie Vital, N. L., in Grande-Rivière; Pierre-Louis Pouget, a Cap mason, M. L. . . .

The first observation to be made is that freedmen more frequently carry slaves' first names than masters'. Further evident was the tendency to add to the given name an adopted one. The latter was seldom that of the former master. To do so would have been to violate colonial law. In fact, by the terms of a statute of the Saint-Domingue Administrators published at Port-au-Prince in June and in July 1773, at Cap, freedmen were forbidden to carry "white" names. They had to have a surname "derived from their African language or their trade and color, which could never be that of a white colonial family." Usually the freedmen drew upon mythology rather than Africa, or upon Greco-Roman or French history: Caesar, Apollo, Voltaire, Alexandre, Hector, Pompey, Brutus. They especially turned to simple or compound Christian names or else some whimsical name the sound of which for some reason or other they liked. Such is the case, for example, of Jean-Louis Doyon, son of a free creole black woman named Marie-Thérèse, and of Jean Doyon, called Dauphiné, a white building contractor. "In keeping with local custom J. L. Doyon carried a surname since childhood; he was commonly called Bonhomme, and, when a colonial law required mulattoes to give up the names of their white fathers, he took the name Doguin."<sup>47</sup>

The use of given names was thus extended: Télémaque, Benjamin, Mathurin, Lubin, Clément, Aimé, Nicolas, Laguerre, Lajoie, Charles-Pierre, Juste, Germain, Prosper, Larose, Félix, Adrien, Augustin, Momplaisir, Pierrot, Dominique.<sup>48</sup> These first names become surnames exist also in France, but on the basis of the lists of names of colonists come to Saint-Domingue, it appears these were few in number. It is therefore safe to say that it was from the study of slave proper names that the freedmen drew this great number of first names elevated to the position of family names.



This was seldom the case with the slave who, from 1793, when restrictions were practically abolished, would take his slave name or an entirely different one supplemented by the surname of a white, whether or not this latter had been his owner. A great number of slaveholders' names are well known to us. So many of them appear again among Haitian family names. By contrast they were not significantly present among the names of freedmen, which again we know well. The conclusion is evident. Clearly, and to repeat, it was particularly the slave who would perpetuate the names of the French colonials in the Haitian onomastic index.

## Inquiry on the Freedmen's Class

IT HAS BEEN SAID repeatedly that the majority of freedmen were mulattoes. This is true only to the extent that one chooses to exclude from their ranks that very large proletariat composed of the "quasi-enfranchised," (*affranchis sans l'être*), "liberated" slaves, and tolerated fugitives; or choose to ignore the wide diversity of enfranchisements based not solely on considerations of birth, but also—in much larger number—on a wide range of motives from which slaves in general, including the blacks, could profit.<sup>49</sup>

Over the years, these accretions were to significantly modify the respective percentages of mulattoes and blacks comprising this class. Apparently routinely and through a cumulative momentum, we have gone on to bestow a "copper tint" upon a class which, long before the Revolution, tended in essence to be, as it was expressed in the colonial language, "on the ebony side." Most free blacks, including of course, the "quasi-enfranchised" and the "liberated" were without doubt much in the same situation as *manants et pobans*, the poor whites, that is, unprovided for and counting for nothing despite their color. In reality, the mulattoes controlled the freedmen's class, dominating it not by virtue of numbers but because of the seniority of their free status, their better economic situation facilitated by their white fathers, and a sometimes assured splendid education in France.

This de facto supremacy was, besides, desired by the colonial administration, which persisted in attributing to the freedmen's class the single qualification "colored people." If interests alone served to determine a class, it was true that the "quasi-enfranchised" and the "liberated" awaiting a definitive statute found themselves still on the margins of the freedmen's class. They were not owners of slaves and plantations, even if, on the other hand, they were free to dispose of their persons and their meager belongings, to work at their convenience for wages, and to live, after a fashion, close to the breezes of liberty.

Why does Moreau de Saint-Méry, who quite properly defined this class with that concise statement "By freedmen I mean all who are neither slave nor white," why, in order to group them, does he invoke the existence of an intermediate class within the very world of the freedmen? After so realistic a definition, why the reservation, this fractioning of a class cut loose from its base? What were these "quasi-enfranchised" and those "liberated" who



were considerably more numerous than the enfranchised? What was colonial policy as regards enfranchisement?

We must try to remove the veil surrounding these social realities in Saint-Domingue, to reveal their complexities patiently so that assertions about these aspects of colonial life may not seem bold or gratuitous. First of all, the thrust of these questions about the enfranchised must be understood. It is not our objective to shift blame on some putative black or mulatto majority in anticipation of subsequently levying charges against the class of freedmen.

It goes without saying that, from the sociological point of view, it will still be possible to assert with relevance that it was the class of the mulattoes who dominated it and, by the will of the masters, ensured its direction in line with colonial reality. This we repeat. Nevertheless, numerically speaking—and that is the sense of certain following questions—this class included a large black majority although, applying today's terminology to the colonial realities, it could be said that these latter were only marginal. Was it truly a matter of "marginals" in a system of masters and slaves in which, despite sanctions levied against them, the "misallied" colonists were always numbered in the ranks of the masters? Why would men and women no longer serving as slaves, whether or not legally free, be counted as slaves? That is the whole question, in our view, an aspect of the social structure of Saint-Domingue to this day unexamined.

Were there more free blacks than free mulattoes among the freedmen? Available statistics are unfortunately sadly incomplete. We have personally examined a great deal of data that point up the above questions. We know to what extent we can rely on the monthly report sent to the ministry by the governors. In order to avoid lengthy proceedings and the vexations of the usual official channels as well as the royal and municipal taxes<sup>50</sup> imposed upon enfranchisement, colonists who gave or sold freedom avoided official declarations as much as possible. Thus it is almost certain that statistics on enfranchisement fail by far to give a true picture of the class of freedmen. One would be, to say the least, ill advised to draw conclusions from incomplete and quite commonly distorted data.

Colonial mentality with its prejudices weighed heavily in the classifications established by Moreau de Saint-Méry based on shades of color. On the one hand he notes that "skin colors closest to that of the black are most common," and on the other hand, for the same class, he gives the following percentages: one-sixth of "lighter color including that of the quadroon," two-sixths of blacks and three-sixths of mulattoes mixed with griffes, marabouts, and sacatras,\* which, in spite of the last percentage being shared by three color groupings, made it possible for him to conclude that mulattoes were in "numbers sufficient to justify in common usage giving their name to the freedmen's class."

\* Marabout—Born of mulatto and black parents.

† A mixture of mulatto and griffe or marabout.

Quite apparent then is the elasticity of the label mulatto and the tenuous nature of any mulatto numerical superiority, especially when one considers the tendency to reason that "very few black libérés differed in their habitual behavior from the slaves" and that "there is a vast difference between emancipated blacks and the others."<sup>51</sup> Discrimination could not be more clearly established. Moreau unconsciously attests this when speaking of the class of the emancipated separated from its mass. It is clearly evident that numerical superiority of the mulattoes separated in this manner was, to say the least, difficult to establish. For these reasons we consider it more prudent in attempting to establish the composition of the freedmen's class to consider the usual ways of enfranchisement, the reasons, secret or avowed, behind the grant and the concession or sale of freedom.

Who precisely were the emancipated? Certainly not just the bastard sons of the colonists. By virtue of their more carefully nurtured education and more assured economic advantages they did, indeed, constitute an elite. An indisputable fact. It must be admitted that in the early days of the colony<sup>52</sup> these bastards clearly dominated in number the emancipated class, which, by custom and continuing routine, they had come to symbolize. Custom, yes, for could this game of descent have sufficed throughout the life of the colony to perpetuate the numerical superiority of mulattoes while the possibilities for legal or extralegal freedom were developing an overwhelming majority for the blacks? This is difficult to believe.<sup>53</sup>

While the freedmen's class comprised at least thirty thousand blacks and mulattoes, when the National Assembly considered according the benefit of citizen's rank with full privileges exclusively to people of color born of free parents, "it was said that the status of blood relationships was so difficult to justify for many reasons." Among these was the poor state of registration of freedmen; according to Mr. Blanchelande himself, the decree would bestow political rights on no more than four hundred mulattoes in Saint-Domingue.<sup>54</sup>

The greatest contribution to emancipation, it can be seen, was provided by the slave's own initiative in asserting his freedom, however extralegal, through the action of marronage. While the data indicate 297, one cannot for the same period ignore the one to two thousand Maroons in the North alone. What must the figures have been for the rest of the country? There is of course the justifiable objection that these Maroons in their extralegal freedom lived outside the law and should therefore not have been officially counted as members of the freedmen's class just as, for example, the thousands of other slaves emancipated, though, for reasons of fiscal evasion, undeclared. However, to that special category if we may use this term, of freedmen, which, for the moment we quickly set aside, there must be added the considerable number of slaves set free because of age or through special consideration—house-servants rewarded, skilled workers, cooks, nurses, wet nurses to the masters' children, fathers and mothers with many children (8



living), exchange for a maidenhead taken, the masters' favorite concubines, good workers and slaves rewarded for acts of devotion. To be included also were those set free for outstanding services, denunciation of Maroons and effective help in capturing them; slaves liberated after service with regular troops or with the militia; liberation through marriage, wills, or reproduction; and, finally, slaves who, by dint of their savings, bought their liberty either in legally registered sale or, as was very often the case, in sales that the colonists, in order to evade the required tax, never registered.

These fraudulent liberations have been clearly defined and highlighted by historian Gabriel Debien in his work on the subject, *Destiny of the Martinique Slave*.<sup>55</sup>

It is still a difficult task to discern their numbers. For the masters the problem was to liberate their better slaves or to let them liberate themselves while at the same time eluding the many formal requirements of the administration which, for reasons of high policy related to color, intended to control at all times the number of freedmen.

They did not notarize their grants of freedom, filed no declaration with the local administration. Thus they avoided the waiting, the annoyances, the refusals and the expense. Therefore one cannot learn from official records the number of manumissions or rather the "liberations"—a term often used to distinguish this *de facto* liberty from legal emancipation; the liberated are considerably more numerous than the freedmen. . . .

This unofficial freedom is granted . . . to occasional overage workers as a reward for their services, perhaps to nearly all. . . . At sixty a slave no longer earned the cost of head tax. Aged domestics, veteran sugar-mill workers, field hands all seemed to be liberated in the same fashion. . . .

Is it still to be believed then that the illegitimate children of the colonists could have comprised a majority in that imposing mass of free people of every order disseminated in the cities and especially in the countryside where for all purposes they escape all controls: skilled workers; itinerant merchants; small businessmen; plantation agents (*économés*); managers; drivers; militiamen; proprietors of *jardins à vivre* and of coffee plantations in the mountains, indigo plantations, cattle pens, and rum factories in the plains? With respect to the ratio of blacks and mulattoes in the composition of the freedmen's class whatever the final conclusions, they boil down in the end to the statement by Boissonade.<sup>56</sup>

Actually, in Saint-Domingue there were only two classes or castes distinctly separated on the basis of ethnic origin: on the one hand the white people and on the other the blacks.

Or more precisely we will end up with the prudent and realistic definition of the freedmen applied by Moreau de Saint-Méry, that great eyewitness

observer of Saint-Domingue: "By enfranchised I mean all who are neither white nor slave."<sup>57</sup>

Whenever masters specified skin color, descriptions of runaways or of the capture of Maroons can help to provide new light for those who choose to dwell on such detail. Would it serve to accentuate the ridiculousness of these arguments about skin color if we were to point out that in Byzantium they went us one better—arguing at length about the gender of the angels?\*

Saint-Méry was the first to propose the existence of an intermediate class among the enfranchised. And it is to him we owe the classification of "white males," depending upon whether they were married to whites, mixed-bloods or blacks. These latter were the "misallied" constituting an intermediate class between the whites, and the colored to which "they belonged by virtue of their alliance." Among the enfranchised themselves, seniority of emancipation and a rather light skin color represented "prerogatives invoked at least in secret," so much so that, on the basis of degree of skin color, one could in such an experience end up with "thirteen distinct classes."

It is for these easily understood reasons that Saint-Méry and the colonial historians did not attempt to perpetuate such an elastic, fragile and diversified classification. Nevertheless one cannot fail to note the existence of a considerable number of freedmen on the edge of the law who, in practice, no longer lived as slaves, but who had not been officially manumitted. Wish it or not, they must, from our humble point of view, be counted among the latter. However sub rosa, their status nevertheless, was that of de facto freedmen.

Who are the representatives of these groups of the free or the liberated? Saint-Méry describes them thus:

I must explain that among the slaves there are also people of every shade of color. Almost invariably it is the mulattoes who are selected as domestic servants.

These slaves consider themselves superior to the free blacks because they are closer to the Whites by virtue of their lighter color. In their manners, they are, after a fashion, another class midway between slavery and enfranchisement, or rather between an extremely benevolent slavery and the tacit liberation enjoyed by many slaves of every color who, whether by their masters' grace, or because they had bought their freedom, or whether finally because the public administration closed its eyes, were considered freedmen though they were not so in fact.<sup>58</sup>

To Saint-Méry's designations of these special freedmen, the Maroons are to be added. We come back to them and for good reason. Some of them took to the woods and disappeared in the *maquis*, where they joined various bands. To repeat, there was no tally kept of them; they were fugitives who

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\* It is said that in 1453 when the Turkish artillery was emplaced before the gates of Constantinople and being prepared for bombarding the city the Byzantine monks calmly walked the ramparts discussing the sex of angels.



disappeared. In contrast, there also existed—these were perhaps the greatest in number—Maroons who secretly enjoyed freedom in faraway districts or even in the environs of the cities. They claimed to be free, and as proof, they exhibited false papers from their masters declaring them to be “on commission,” “on patrol,” or else “free papers” (*billets de liberté*).

Many of these were “skilled workers” (*nègres à talents*). They boasted a trade and, thanks to the complicity of white proprietors or freedmen who utilized their services, they at length attained the benefit of a sort of stipulation designating them, in effect, free. According to the notary Hilliard D'Auberteuil, there were five thousand of these just in the Cap region alone.<sup>59</sup>

Father Cabon confirmed the existence of numerous fugitives “living by their wits, bearing arms so as to look like free people . . . ; not only men, but also women thus assume their liberty, the latter finding no difficulty in setting up a household at some distant location.”<sup>60</sup>

In this way men and women disappeared or were lost and confounded in distant cantons, leaving no traces. In fact, these were people who enjoyed a relative freedom. They exercised their trades, collected a salary, hired out or refused their services, and were not narrowly constrained by any schedule or by the work rules of slavery. In a word, they were free to dispose of their person and their skills. How else could you describe them except than as liberated? And can we ignore these growing numbers of organized and tolerated fugitives who carved out a relatively assured freedom if d'Auberteuil places them at five thousand just in the Cap area, no doubt including them with the enfranchised? The numbers are important. Thus, grafted onto the freedmen's class there appeared an important segment of quasi-liberated, of liberated, overage, tolerated fugitives, and others who certainly no longer had slave status nor its legal condition. In practice they were free in their movements, worked for a salary, had property rights. It was an enormous proletariat, apparently more numerous than the enfranchised mulattoes and free blacks.

We will exclude from this number the slaves who enjoyed a freedom known as *liberté de savane*.<sup>\*</sup> These constituted a special case. The slave who enjoyed *liberté de savane* was still a slave. His liberty was strictly relative. But the others, the unregistered emancipated, and the imposing numbers of freedmen enjoyed the advantages of person and property. It is quite conceivable that many of them were able by the fruits of their labor to pay the registration cost that the master who freed them chose not to pay so as to avoid expenses or difficulties. We yield to the evidence that there was more than just the matter of payments to be made. One had to deal with administrative red tape and unforeseen circumstances of every nature,<sup>61</sup> which, in planned difficulties and discouragements, constituted that barrier which Professor Debien has called the “high policy of color in an administration that meant always to control the number of enfranchisements.”<sup>62</sup>

Doubtless, this color policy flowed via secret instructions from Paris and



was firmed up in support of the régime and the security of the colony, with the tacit agreement of the colonists. Besides, the latter had no recourse other than to submit to the refusals without explanation or to the deliberate delays which more elegantly indicated this negative response of the colonial administration.

Colonists were not often known to protest the obstructions. They ignored them and quickly contented themselves with the growth of this mass of the liberated forming an "intermediary class" between enslaved and enfranchised, as Moreau de Saint-Méry described them. Neither the administration nor the colonists had any interest whatever in making official the free status of the "quasi-liberated." Because of this, the freedman's class continued to drag along as an appendix a considerable proletariat. On one side there was the legal segment and on the other the real base, moving along cheek by jowl with no danger of the fusion which "the high policy of color" aimed to prevent at any cost.<sup>63</sup> Why? Simply because the base, this proletariat, this real segment was in very large majority composed of the dark-skinned. This then explains why the administration, which knew the situation intimately, made no move to require the colonists to officially document tacit manumissions; this certainly would have enriched the public coffers and made possible a great amount of useful public works without in any appreciable way changing the free status of the beneficiaries. The administration preferred not to consider such a useless and expensive bluff and to ignore infractions committed openly by all. It chose also to complicate any possibility of solution by imposing exhausting formalities, by uncompromising refusal of "so-called unjustified enfranchisements"—actions by which the blacks especially were victimized as though by chance.

There was also the continued increase in the tax on enfranchisement which again, as if by chance, especially handicapped the liberated blacks, while mulattoes continued to benefit from acts of recognition and manumission by their white fathers. Both Mr. Rohan and Mr. Bongars provide cases in point: "During the two years we have been here (it was then 1768) a resident of Léogâne freed some thirty mulattoes almost all of them his children."

Of the very light skinned blacks in the parishes of Jacmel, Cayes-Jacmel, and Fonds, the percentage of illegitimate children recognized by white fathers throughout the eighteenth century is 55 percent<sup>64</sup> of the total births declared on parish registers.

Let us try to get to the bottom of things to uncover the secret designs of the administration and the hidden goals of that "high policy of color." An eventual legal recognition of the numerical superiority of blacks within and dominating the freedmen's class would shock the colonial mentality and its prejudices as well as oppose the higher interests of the colonial system. The liberated blacks found themselves much closer to the slaves than to the mulattoes, these latter being in a position to be partially claimed by masters,



a bit of whose blood they bore through birth. Further, these blacks practiced some minor craft, were salaried workers and, in brief, were a community of the needy, slaving away and hard up. Few among them possessed the attributes and the prestige of their masters. Unlike the true enfranchised, they were not proprietors of coffee plantations in the hills or of plantations serviced by slaves. If, by virtue of their economic involvement and their status as propertied persons, the emancipated blacks or mulattoes might one day find their interests intermingled with those of the white masters, they remained nonetheless *libérés*, economically weak and, because of this, more inclined in any future social upheaval to go along with the slave.

From the point of view of color, this was the major objection. The result was the ostracism in which *libérés* were systematically held and the permanent barrier to a fusion that would swamp the mulatto group perched atop the class of freedmen with free blacks relegated to the lower ranks, whatever their seniority in terms of enfranchisement. Hilliard d'Auberteuil proposed "to marry every free black to a mulattress and every mulatto to a free black woman." He envisioned a "high yellow" class which thenceforth would prevent "blacks in marronage from calling themselves free," a class of people "even further removed from the negro type than they have been up to present times." A class of legalized freedmen dominated by blacks would have been a class stronger in numbers than that of the whites, upsetting the balance of power, enjoying more or less extended social advantages, inundating the militia with multiple and ceaseless waves of recruits likely to contaminate the slaves by giving them an inopportune image of the possibilities of a general uprising.

The colonists held always before them the nearby example of the eastern sector, where an uncontrolled policy of liberation and a life commonly shared by Spanish master and slave in open promiscuity had resulted in the loss of all disciplines, in a generalized insolence, and in the notorious underdevelopment of that part of the island of Saint-Domingue.

The mulatto existed. He was an accident of a passing passion (*accident de parcours*) triggered by the absence of white women as well as by the search for new sensual pleasures in the arms of the last remaining roucou-colored Indians or of the young attractive black woman embodying in her harmony of form the firmness and grace of sculptured ebony. These bastard mulattoes numbered five hundred in 1703. At the turn of the century there would be twenty, thirty times as many, perhaps more already liberated. There could be no question of returning them to slavery—it was already too late—nor of exporting them; they were too many, and, besides, how and in what direction would this uprooting and transfer be effected? Nor could they be relegated to the mountains as was proposed from time to time over the years as this rapid increase was noted with alarm. In short, there remained no solution other than to organize this class of freedmen in such a way as to guarantee mulatto supremacy. A number of factors served to recommend this

policy to the view of the colonists whose eyes were fixed on the single scale value in the colonial hierarchy: Color. After all, the mulatto's skin color was closer to that of the white than was the color of the liberated or free black. Between mulatto and white and especially in the small parishes there was a certain rapprochement in their social circles, not to mention the customary liaisons with mulatto women so avidly sought by libertine whites.<sup>65</sup> These people of color enjoyed greater access to education and held a more solid economic standing than did their darker brothers. In short, colonial strategy in this regard was based on a complex of prejudices, individual weaknesses, and consequences encouraged and supported by the whites.

This class of freedmen was desirable as a buffer group and as an image of the advantages to which, for the most part, the slaves could aspire following the example of these mixed-bloods who, despite the "superiority" of their color, by the very fact of the irradicable imprint of their origin had to conduct themselves with servility in the presence of the masters. Though free, they were nevertheless subjected, with not too much tolerance, to the well-defined and providential supremacy of the white man.

In the mind of the colonist, the mulatto was to be more than anything else a guinea pig, called upon to attest to that superiority. This is the true spirit and secret design of the cumulative laws "making it illegal to . . ." which, in spite of enfranchisement, never failed to associate the freedmen with the slaves or to refuse citizen's status with full privileges to the former. The use of the mulatto for this purpose is clearly indicated in a document cited by Moreau de Saint-Méry in his *Notes Historiques*. In it, we see revealed a double specter: the perpetual prison envisioned for the slave and the condemnation of the people of color, trapped by the indelible stain of their birth and the scorn for African blood:

It is essential to keep far apart one from the other the kind that commands and that which obeys. One of the surest means of effecting this is the perpetuating of the stamp once imprinted by slavery. In this way the mixture of races will certainly occur less frequently.<sup>66</sup>

In addition, so they thought, respect for and acceptance of the master would be strengthened first and above all on the basis of his color. In the colonial Assembly, Mr. Poucignon explained with less circumlocution the precise goal envisioned for the class of freedmen.

Slavery [he declared] can only be maintained by the innate sense among blacks of the superiority of the white race. But in order to keep this moral force more powerful, more effective than physical force we must have a class of freedmen. Furthermore it is essential that the descendants of these freedmen resulting from continual intercourse with whites be allowed to share in the exercise of political rights only to the degree that their skin color cannot evoke significant communication with the crude senses of the slave.<sup>67</sup>



In effect, the plan was to use the colored people as a local force, despite the "vice of their birth." They nursed a special animosity against the poor whites who begrudged them their place in the sun, competing with them in the trades, the shops and as peddlars. This deep jealousy, it was said, would be very useful in containing internal turbulence even, when occasionally needed, in turning the freedmen against the poor whites. There was also the matter of recruiting volunteer battalions for military expeditions, the mulatto being, in the mind of the colonial, suitable for all kinds of jobs. He was used freely, in return receiving only derisive favors full of restrictions and prohibitions. And here again, in the organization of the Saint-Domingue Militia, this major concern with separation by skin color. There comes to mind the famous ordinance of Count d'Estaing, mandating a perpetual state of alert, with colonists armed to the teeth and militias organized according to the colonial scale of skin color.

Each colonist is required to have at all times a gun, bayonet, powder sack, saber, machete or sword, four pounds of powder, and twelve pounds of shot. Militias will be composed of the various estates of the colony including all the misallied, the mixed blacks designated as quadroons, mulattoes, griffes and free blacks. All these classes will form companies distinguished one from the other by the estates and the color of the citizens composing them.<sup>68</sup>

The ideal would have been to limit their number, the better to keep the enfranchised under control. Attempts were made to prohibit manumissions, sometimes to limit them, at other times to control them by tedious verification of registrations. These efforts, however, were short lived. They were all doomed to failure, given the perpetual temptation of black and light-skinned women who, on their perfumed, garlanded beds, daily won the battle of equality, thwarting colonial policy in the passion of tropical settings and the extraordinary libertine behavior for which Saint-Domingue was the theater.<sup>69</sup> Thus the colonist dug his own grave with his penis.

The smile of the dark and the light-skinned women continued to control and to strip the colonial gears. By illegitimate births, through favors and grants of freedom extracted amid grateful sighs on straw matting, in mahogany beds, or in alcoves, the increase in freedmen gathered momentum and consolidated itself.

At Versailles, the evidence that the laws were inoperative was already accepted. To Governor de Rohan, the king suggested his preference for "the barrier of customs" over legislative measures. These laws or barriers of custom were but so much sand carried off on the winds of sexual license. The impressive number of black and mulatto women set free—had this perhaps been noted? In a sample of manumission declarations for 9 June 1793—and this is but one of numerous examples—there were fifty-two women and only 19 men. How then can the conclusion be avoided that considerably

earlier than the Revolution the number of even the registered and recognized freedmen largely exceeded that of the whites?

Statistics on manumission were, in addition, deliberately falsified with respect to ratio between classes. One is led to ask the reason for such trickery. Several hypotheses immediately suggest themselves. Could it have been the behavior of the ostrich refusing to face reality? Might it have been, on the part of the colonial administration, the dissembling of a setback in the application of a policy enunciated at Versailles? Or could it have been the avoidance of indicating to the freedmen the size of their forces in valid figures? By no means are these questions and answers yet sufficient. Lucien Paytraud, who describes having found very few legal manumissions in the Archives de France, states positively that of 845 enfranchisements in 1785, only 108 had been granted without fraud.

The number of declared manumissions dropped from 845 in 1785, to a mere 297 in 1791, with the same colonial sources admitting the existence of twenty-four hundred enfranchised in 1790 and from twenty-six to twenty-eight hundred in 1791, an accretion of some two to four thousand. The declared births for the period cannot of course account for the enormous difference between 297 and two thousand or four thousand from one year to another. There are, in addition, other suspect motives behind the avoidance of official declarations of manumissions. For the 297 manumissions announced by the administration, 547,892 livres were credited to the Manumissions Account (*Caisse des Libertés*), while this same *caisse*, which was fed only by enfranchisements, was able in the same year to dispense 651,354 livres, and this without adversely affecting the important projects for which it specifically was responsible: improving pier embankments, the king's gardens, public fountains, watering troughs, public washrooms, and so on.<sup>70</sup>

It is possible that the continued practice of false declarations of the number of annual enfranchisements concealed not only irregular and clandestine grants and the very large bribes shared by the responsible functionaries, but that they also covered the imperatives of a more general policy enunciated by the Metropole and with which the colonial administration faithfully complied in its own way by occasionally greasing palms. Lepelletier de Saint-Rémy mentions "deliberately erroneous figures," and Beaubrun Ardouin accuses "the colonial government of regularly falsifying the freedmen and slave populations in order not to give any of the enlightened among them the means of learning their true numbers."<sup>71</sup>

The barrier constantly hurdled by means of fraud and financial intrigue was the same elsewhere in the neighboring colonies, where, now and again, there were denouncements of "the abuse of enfranchisements in fact or in law" and of slaves who "obtain their liberty at reduced price due to their intelligence." A letter from Barbados, dated 25 July 1787 and published in *Affiches Américaines* called for a very heavy tax on manumissions "as in Martinique where enfranchisements solicited in a succession of liaisons inimi-



cal to public morality (*bonnes mœurs*) are very heavily taxed—a thousand gourdes and more for a single slave and as much for each child.” In addition to the constant tax increase in Saint-Domingue, there was, from time to time, the threat to seize all irregular freedmen. The newspapers publicized this threatened action:

There are many slaves whose masters intend to free them but who are not actually free. Slaves unaccounted for or who pretend to be free without having been manumitted with all the formalities prescribed by the regulations shall be sold for the king's coffers or sent back to their work gang.<sup>72</sup>

These threats were short-lived. Censuses continued to be falsified or to reveal great increases in nondeclaration in every parish. No longer was there even the attempt to hide the facts. Quite openly, the mass of irregular freedmen moved about on the fringes of the large cities, coming and going as if they were beneficiaries of an official regulation acceptable alike to colonist and administration. A new and short-lived attempt, as brutal as it was useless, was that of the General Assembly of Saint-Marc which, by the decree of 4 June 1790, “provisionally suspends enfranchisements: marriages between slaves and free people . . . reserves to itself the examination of requests for granting freedom through acts or wills.”<sup>73</sup>

What possible ends could this new proscription serve? From that moment events were already in motion in the wake of the dramatic internal divisions among the disunited colonists, between colonist and freedmen, between master and slave in constant and progressive rebellion. The progress of the high policy of color continued under extreme mobility, tossed about, jostled, turning like a weathervane, aligning itself, borne slowly and surely upon the winds of revolt and by contradictory imperatives. At one time the colonists almost had to beg for the support of the freedmen, reminding them that they, like the whites, were slave owners. In their climb toward equality the freedmen would adopt a similarly sordid rationale. At times there would be threats against those enfranchised accused, and not without reason, of inciting the slaves to rebellion and supplying arms to rebel Maroon bands. Again, and finally, there would be need to remind the enfranchised: “These Africans whose blood flows through your veins, are they not men?” or to adjure the blacks “never to forget that the arms with which you regained your liberty were provided by mulattoes.”

By the light of flames which ravaged the northern parishes, this flirtation with the enfranchised became even bolder. Incarcerated mulattoes and free blacks—even those linked to the uprising by Ogé and Chavanne and condemned in absentia—benefitted from a general amnesty throughout the parishes. The colonist stroked the feathers of the freedmen. When the first moment of stupor had passed, he opened his arms to those who, in light of the generalized revolt of the slaves, represented the only possible support.

The first reaction had clearly been one of prudence and of understandable

and legitimate suspicion. On 25 August the order had been issued "that all blacks and mulattoes were to remain indoors." They had been informed that the Church of the Ursuline Nuns in Cap had been made available to them as a sanctuary (*résidence surveillé*).<sup>74</sup> Then the General Assembly had chosen to soft-pedal its resentment and suspicions. For survival it was important to join hands with the devil. Thus we see the colonists dangling before the eyes of the enfranchised the lure of epaulets and stripes. And we become eyewitnesses of that extraordinary event of colonial life: the colonists themselves for the first time offering the mass of the pseudoenfranchised and all that teeming proletariat of liberated blacks, free so long in expectation, to change their status from pseudo to official freedmen. This fusion of the freedmen's class so long cut off from its proletariat was finally envisaged and implemented. One has to believe that the peril was indeed gravely menacing for the colonists to be moved to renounce so categorically the very basis of the "high policy of color."

The fact is, the General Assembly, in its sessions of 4 October and 12 October, adopted the following motions:

ARTICLE 1. There shall be created a provisional corps composed of free men of color.

ARTICLE 2. All free men of color will be eligible for membership therein.<sup>75</sup>

ARTICLE 3. Equally eligible will be all people of color who for want of certification enjoy only a precarious freedom.

ARTICLE 4. For the purpose of providing such people the means to obtain this certification without cost, freedmen who have not had their liberty ratified will be able to acquire the same permanently without cost or tax by serving two years in the said corps at the end of which time their service shall have been completed.

ARTICLE 5. Officers' ranks shall be filled by men of color who are owners of property and born of free parents.

The colonist Denard who defended this project and determined the vote of the Assembly had previously made certain suggestive statements which, with considerable cleverness, condemned the policy of color fragmentation of a single class.

Yesterday you were told beware awakening these men, they are dormant, let them be. But, gentlemen, these men are no longer asleep. For two years they have not slept. Their constant goal is the amelioration of their lot. It is by no means their claim to an epaulet that will ruin the colony. If you do not register these men with as much confidence as the others you insult them, by excluding them from the benefits and burdens of society you scorn them. In forming the corps it is absolutely necessary to meld the [unofficial] freedmen with the genuinely free and not to distinguish them by color since they are all included in the same circle.<sup>76</sup>



Sonthonax publicly announced that "to be a national guardsman one need only be free," noting at the same time that "free status must be established by title or common knowledge. This latter type of proof is equivalent to and takes the place of all titles. Every National Guardsman irrespective of color can be made an officer."<sup>77</sup>

Alarmed by the continued desertions of slaves in the West and then in the North, where "three-quarters were fleeing the flaming plain," the authorities in the threatened parishes ensured the regroupment of the freedmen's class as a possible shield. As for the free mulattoes and blacks in the militia, their seniority rights, a virtual monopoly of officers' ranks, were no longer recognized. This privilege was extended even to those only reputedly free and lacking certification. In a special proclamation, Blanchelande reminded this class of their stake in putting aside for the moment all their other demands:

Can you in the midst of the distress and the armed tumult ask us to concern ourselves with your special interests? Ah! Even were you at this moment to gain all you desire, of what use such a victory if, for want of having joined your energies against a common enemy as formidable to you as to the whites, the complete ruin of the French area of Saint-Domingue were achieved? Is it your desire to take these rights by force and to profit from the general distress to have them confirmed? Moreover, do you not see that should you profit from it you will be accused of being instigators of the slave insurrection, and agitators behind the atrocious crimes they commit? . . . What, those same work gangs whom you vaunted before the General Assembly as alone being capable of suppressing the insubordination, would it be you who would turn them against their masters, command them to devastation, murder and arson?<sup>78</sup>

One is frankly moved to laughter at this fool's bargain tendered the freedmen. They were, in short, offered the fusion of their class, an offer that shocked the pretentious and egotistic black and mulatto elite, the right to strut about in dolmans bedizened with stripes and epaulets, to engage in combat on condition that they leave behind as hostages their wives, their children and possessions, renouncing for the time being all other claims. For their silence or treason, they would be paid off in lip service. The high policy of color, however, was by no means at the end of its nauseating, hypocritical maneuverings nor of its cumulative changes. In 1793, the term *enfranchisé* designated exclusively the mulattoes. Free Negroes who were part of the class were associated with the newly free. Grouping by color was neater.

The liberated slave called himself a cultivator, and his former commanders [drivers] were designated by the amiable appellation "Conductors of labor." Most of the Negro farmers were hired by contract renewable by the year and were assigned to cultivation and to the sugar mills from sunrise to

sunset. The whip was suppressed and replaced by the rod and the reduction or voidance of salary. Black women had the temerity to claim equal salaries with men, and this initial feminist demand was listened to with only half an ear and drowned in considerations about inequality in physical strength, habitual or periodic illnesses, pregnancies, childbirth and nursing. The men took off Saturdays and Sundays "wishing," in the words of Polvérel, "to test, so to speak, their liberty and to assure themselves it is not a dream." The young impetuous Commissioner Sonthonax was himself a *mésallié*. He lived publicly with a mulatto woman, the beautiful Eugénie Bléjac, whom he dreamt of marrying. Thomas Madiou<sup>80</sup> even stated that Sonthonax married this young lady of color, whose mother, Rose Bléjac, was "well known" in Jérémie, a phrase that speaks volumes. The commissioner, perhaps sincerely, astutely played the game of the liberated black masses. Like Polvérel, he dared to affirm,

. . . that they are the strongest: Formerly you were given barely enough clothes to keep you from dying—there was no interest, no sacrifices for the health and cleanliness of your quarters nor for the little comforts of your household. The produce from your gardens was for each of you a supplementary resource for meeting the needs which they [the masters] wished neither to see nor satisfy. Today slavers and cannibals are no more. . . . Nature made you free and it is Nature that has made you equal with those who call themselves your masters. . . . You are the strongest. . . .<sup>81</sup>

In a final attempt to save a henceforth condemned regime, this flirtation, now with the mulattoes, again with the newly liberated, helped after a fashion to maintain the division. Some of the old colonists who were rooted for half a century in colonial life took flight. A Mr. Tapiau regretfully "leaves for France after forty-eight years in the colony," declaring that he would return next year if all were peaceful.<sup>82</sup>

In the press, longtime masters advertised for "white servants." Forgetting the past, the *Gazette des Cayes* fulminated against the English who, like the cruel Spaniards in the days of Hispaniola, "still used dogs trained to track down the unfortunates whom despite the cry of Nature and the generous example of the French they continue to treat as beings of an inferior class."<sup>83</sup>

Thus this sudden burgeoning love for the Negroes. Oh, how they were wooed from this time forward, the better to lull them to sleep! And how pleasant an image and how suddenly the union of the classes took on the appeasing image of a tricolored rainbow!

From Paris a colonial landowner issued this impassioned appeal for a triple entente:

It took the abolition of black slavery to make us realize its futility. . . . Let us deliver ourselves into the embrace of our new fellow citizens. Let us form with them and with those in whose veins our blood is mingled with



the blood of Africa a triple bond which the devil of discord must despair of severing. It will be fitting to offer the universe the spectacle of a family as interesting for its union as for the varied colors nature has sown among the members who compose it. . . .<sup>84</sup>

That appeal comes from Larchevesque-Thibaud, the popular attorney whose sterling qualities were vaunted in Cap in unforgettable ditties.

Oh, now 'tis a bishop they'll send  
In truth, an "archbishop" should lend  
For us, he'd be hell, an évêque  
Our good luck if indeed Larchevesque.<sup>85</sup>

No one was taken in by the enticements of these poisonous sirens. . . . Polvérel, more the realist, had understood the futility of all deceit:

Two years of war against the insurgent Africans convinced the proprietors that henceforth it was impossible to maintain slavery. The work gangs were nonexistent, their homes or plantations burned or devastated. France was being drained of men and money while its armies were being wiped out in Saint-Domingue by African forces increased daily by desertions from the work gangs.<sup>86</sup>

It was no longer difficult to perceive that the Africans remained unresponsive to the continuous wave of congeniality and endearments. Marronage increasingly took the form of massive desertions and organized, armed rebellions. It was not without reason that the authorities brutally attacked Voodoo, abandoning the verbiage and sterile deceits aimed at simpletons (*bouquis*) who were now "philosophers", knives between their teeth when not carrying slung rifles.

The document we subsequently present at length confirms, should there be such a need, the political character of the Voodoo gatherings after the Ceremony of Bois-Caïman, during the course of which Maroons, under the pretext of the dance, organized the rebellion, established necessary liaisons with the work gangs, distributed arms and issued passwords. Thus it is in this sense that this popular religion which in itself rested on no precise ideal of liberty can be linked with all slave resistance and with the struggle for liberty. This is an undeniable historic fact with all deference to certain authors who, like M. Debbasch, for example, have accused the Haitian school of drifting into romantic assertions without foundation. There is in this charge an inexplicable misunderstanding. In an earlier study<sup>87</sup> we affirmed what we now repeat and will continue to repeat, that secret Voodoo rites provided singularly effective means of action and facilitated important secret meetings and a network of communications among various work gangs. Finally, they created an atmosphere of panic favorable to rebellions.

While the priests used the Christian religion and the threat of eternal damnation to combat marronage, Voodoo priests were selling amulets that made fugitive slaves invulnerable. It was in Voodoo meetings that two hundred blacks from Corail, a dependency of Marmelade, frequently assembled to be instructed by the mulatto Jerome, who preached independence while distributing leaded batons (*batons ferrés*) and cabalistic objects. That was in 1786. Earlier there had been François Macandal. Later there would be Boukman, Polydor, or Romaine la Prophétesse. Were they not also Voodoo experts as were Halaou, Courlonge, Macaya, Jeannot, Guiambois, Carreau, Despinville, Jean-Pineau, Jacinthe or Candy? We doubt that any of the essayists who deny the effect of Voodoo on the series of revolts which shattered the regime will be able to refute the following, previously mentioned document. It was in fact the colonial administration that recognized the aggravated danger to public safety posed by indecent spectacles:

Extract of the Minutes of the Commission delegated by the French Government in the Leeward Islands. The commission, informed that dangerous assemblies known as Vaudou are continuing despite the prohibitions levied by the constituted authorities;

Whereas the object of this dance seems to be the incitement of ideas inimical to a republican government, and

Whereas perfidious men may, under pretext of seemingly innocent amusement, abuse the good faith of citizens who with no ill intention indulge therein, and

Whereas the dance known as Vaudou is antagonistic to good morals, to Republican institutions, to decency, to the very health of the participants in these scandalous scenes; that frightful oaths, which if carried out can compromise public safety, are taken upon the direction of the presiders at these ridiculous yet frightful orgies, always followed by prostitution; that these infamies are carried on under the eyes of the young, even of children who, for shame, are admitted to a spectacle as disgusting as it is pernicious to their education;

The commission has decreed and does hereby decree the following:

Art. 1. Vaudou Dance gatherings are strictly forbidden.

Art. 2. Any citizen apprehended in such dances shall be arrested and suffer a month's imprisonment.

Art. 3. Individuals who permit their homes to be used for such gatherings, and those in charge shall be arrested and suffer three months imprisonment and a fine of one hundred pounds.

Art. 4. The civil and military authorities of the Colony are charged with the diligent execution of this decree, in the cities and throughout the countryside.

The present decree shall be printed, sent to all civil and military authorities, transcribed in the registers of the administrative corps, and posted everywhere as needed.



Enacted in Cap, the first of Frimaire, fifth year of the French Republic, one and indivisible.

Signed in the minute book, Leblanc, president; Sonthonax, Raimond, commissioners; Pascal, secretary general.<sup>88</sup>

Could one wish for a single last characteristic typical of the curious contradictions that accompany the agony of the regime?

With the news of the disaster afflicting Saint-Domingue the representatives of the United Cities of Commerce and the Colonies, the high bourgeois of the French slave ports called for urgent help, consisting specifically of ten vessels from two to three hundred tons for the West and an equal amount for the North loaded with flour, wine, biscuit, vegetables, ironwork, coarse linen, four thousand men and six hundred laborers, an advance of 120 millions to restore the burned out plantations, towns and wharves and the purchase of twelve thousand blacks at twenty-five hundred livres<sup>89</sup> plus ten thousand mules, goats and cattle and two hundred farm tools. This said, those fleshy merchants who for two centuries from father to son fattened on the sweat of the slave awaited, mouth agape, for a new gift of manna to fall conveniently from heaven. . . .

At the same time, the *Gazette des Cayes* denounced:

The little maudlin masters who full of conceit live on perfumes and who instead of sharing service with their fellow citizens and appearing when sorties against the enemy are necessary remain by the side of their little mistresses who at the mere mention of the word equality suffer a heart attack. . . .<sup>90</sup>

How could they completely escape that trap, the seduction by the disturbing black and light-skinned women of Saint-Domingue?

The minister and his assistants had only to affirm the failure of their high policy of color. On all sides it was shattered, torn to shreds, the rents long and obvious. It was only with difficulty that one could discern its final tremors in the midst of all these turnabouts. We will however have shown in different periods and in their mobility (*mouvance*) the apparent constants uncovered in that high policy of color. It is the same policy that Hédouville would revive at the approach of the war in the South in a vain attempt to stem the rising tide of Independence. It is the same policy with its dramatic sequels, which for so long at so many crossroads in our history has raised in the Haitian community the macabre specter of divisions and hatreds based on these hypocrisies of the skin.

And to think that these fratricidal clashes, the bloodshed, so many tears, so much mourning count for so little! Might it not be that the simple temptation of the imprint of a black nipple protruding from a multicolored blouse was, in the beginning, at the root of these misfortunes that have continued to weigh heavily upon our evolution?

Although stemming from previous considerations, one final question concerning the freedmen's class will carry us more directly to the heart of this study dedicated to marronage. What was the real position of the freedmen with respect to fugitive slave flights? Did they encourage desertions, and were they involved? The answer is both yes and no. The most obvious fact in the "descriptions" is that enfranchised proprietors, mulattoes, and free Negroes were considerably less frequently than whites the victims of marronage, and by far. As a matter of fact, despite the rapid growth of the freedmen's class the whites continued to own more than 75 percent of the wealth of Saint-Domingue and therefore of the plantations and slaves. It is doubtful that on the eve of the Revolution the freedmen owned in land and slaves, manufactures, or plantations that 25 percent of the colonial wealth it has been customary to attribute to them. This would in part explain the disproportion in the described loss of slaves.

Another hypothesis could be based on the fact that freedmen proprietors lived somewhat removed, in the small parishes, and on coffee plantations, in the mountains. Handicapped by the long distances and bad conditions of the roads, they may have neglected to have their fugitive advertisements sent to the newspapers of Cap and Port-au-Prince.

Besides, for an attempt so often futile these fugitive advertisements were rather expensive according to the rates approved by the administrators, Vincent and Barbé de Marbois: First publication of three lines of type or less, three livres and thirty sols for each subsequent printing; for a first printing of any notice of more than three lines, twenty sols per line and ten sols per line for each subsequent publication.

In the long run we can rather safely believe that freedmen treated their slaves more humanely and that the case of the fierce, pitiless griffe Jean-Baptiste Lapointe or of the free Negro who was a cruel master to Dessalines, then a slave, did not throughout the colonial period negate a rather meaningful solidarity ultimately reinforced by political interest, with the requirement of a mutual safety dominating unilateral interests. This was the inevitable coalition based on blood, but much later. During colonization this solidarity was real in the context of individual relationships but not as the overall behavior of the freedmen's class.

Freedmen and their slaves "intuitively drew nearer to each other forming a mass," wrote Gabriel Debien.<sup>91</sup> In this regard two extracts from Saint-Méry's *Notes historiques* are informative.

Their [the freedmen's] plantations are the haunts and asylum for all the idle and vagrant freedmen and for a great number of fugitive slaves and deserters from work gangs.<sup>92</sup>

They are dangerous people and friends of the slaves to whom they are still attached by many more ties than they are to us.<sup>93</sup>



For his part, Father Cabon quite rightly concludes: "The freedmen were linked with the slaves because they themselves had been slaves, or if they were born free, by virtue of at least one of their forbears."<sup>94</sup>

Cases of concealing Maroons are numerous. For example, the *Avis du Cap* of 26 June 1769 describes the Maroon Zaïre, a Congo runaway accompanied by another woman. "We believe she is being hidden by free blacks in this town." In the same year, 1769, a decree of the *Conseil Supérieur* of Port-au-Prince declares,

the said Laurent Macé, free negro convicted of having given shelter to maroons Baptiste and Marie Louise, in reparations whereof Laurent Macé and his wife Marie-Agnes, a free black, are divested of their freedom in conformity with the King's declaration of 10 June 1705 and will be sold for the coffers of the King.<sup>95</sup>

Shortly afterward, in April 1770, a twenty-seven-year-old black creole seamstress close to labor was presumed to be at Cap under the protection of a free Negro.

In November 1771, eight male slaves and ten women from Plantation Piron on Black Mountain were presumed "to have been drawn off by some people of color" and the black woman Thisbé was suspected of having thrown in with a free mulatto from Tiburon who also had since disappeared. In May 1772, four runaway men and women were "presumed to be harbored by other slaves or free blacks." At Grande-Rivière de Léogâne, five Maroons were said to have been "taken away by some colored people." In October 1773, five Maroons declared "sheltered by some blacks near the border" could not be found "despite searches even to the Spanish sector. . . ."

Solidarity was not the only thing at stake. There was in addition the matter of interests. But perhaps the call of the blood was the dominant factor in the minds of the black and mulatto proprietors.

Like the freedmen, the whites had also formed the habit of calling upon the Maroons. The latter were employed as day workers or if they had a trade they hired out their services for wages. It was commonly arranged to screen them from the vigilance of the authorities. They lived in hiding even on the plantations. This practice of secretly utilizing the services of fugitive slaves offered exceptional advantages—the avoidance of paying the purchase price of a slave and the head tax, thus completing without disbursement the cadre of workers or farm hands. The advantage of such cheap labor and its appeal are apparent; hence the unexpected encouragement given by masters to the sheltering of Maroons in contempt of the very heavy penalties provided against this complicity by the Code Noir.

One cannot help but suspect an active complicity among certain free blacks, mulattoes and those in marronage.<sup>96</sup> It was not simply by chance that in the historic account—this time minus any legend—of the death of the celebrated Boukman, at the very side of the Maroon chieftain attacked by

surprise, there was "a valiant mulattō who never deserted him," as it would be one day with the Emperor at Pont-Rouge\* and Charlotin Marcadieu "who fought like a lion against three dragoons before falling mortally wounded," linked unto death with the courageous rebel of Bois Caïman.<sup>97</sup>

In addition to shelter generously provided Maroons, the repeated incitements to rebellion, the multiple activities of mixed-bloods like the mulatto Jerome, actively associated with desertions and the slaves' struggle for liberation, there are, here and there in quite suggestive examples, descriptions of arms distributions and a considerable traffic in munitions or contraband powder and guns. It becomes apparent that Maroon bands were beginning to add to their traditional machetes more effective defensive means, particularly against the militia.

In November 1767, when it was discovered that some Maroon bands had been supplied with firearms by freedmen, the colonial government forbade freedmen to buy arms and powder without special authorization from the procurator.

At Jérémie, in January 1792, a Bordeaux vessel would be seized, carrying under a stock of shoes "six hundred guns, fifty pistols and an equal number of sabers."<sup>98</sup> It was the Americans and especially the English in Jamaica who supplied this contraband. In the previously mentioned report that M. de Cambefort addressed to Blanchelande on 7 November 1791 to report the death of the Maroon leader Boukman, he mentioned that "Boukman was carrying a double-barreled gun (belonging to his master Mr. Clement whom he had murdered) and a pair of excellent pistols. . . . Having moved forward to the Duthil plantation I took from them an eight-pounder, a mortar, some twenty pounds of powder and a number of bullets."<sup>99</sup>

A December 1792 letter from citizen Pageot relative to an expedition against the slaves in revolt on the Artaud plantation at Maribaroux indicates that the rebel band of the Maroon chief Noël left lying about, in addition to a number of dead bodies, "a dozen sturdy guns, some pistols, sabers and gunpowder sacks."<sup>100</sup> In skirmishes with the rebels, guns—even cannons—rather than machetes are encountered with increasing frequency. The indigent Maroons were not able to purchase arms. In this regard they profited from internal quarrels among the whites by virtue of which they received occasional help from a few imprudent colonists playing with fire and especially from the generous pursestrings of freedmen, blacks and mulattoes sufficiently enlightened to understand the imperative of a collective rescue. Parallel with this solidarity, whether of racial or of mutual interests joined in resistance, another equally authentic aspect could be observed. That is the repression of marronage once again by freedmen under the guise of a defense of their interests but this time a defense stripped of every consideration for the slightest bit of racial solidarity. Situated for the most part in the hills and

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\* Where Dessalines was ambushed and assassinated.



in distant cantons less protected by the militia, freedmen's plantations, because of this isolation, were particularly attractive to starving Maroons or organized bands of fugitives seeking provisions. The food crops of these freedmen were easy and frequent targets for Maroon incursions. Examples of assassinations committed against them by Maroons can be cited. The Taquoa Antoine, a Maroon, declared that "his master is a free black killed by Maroons in the mountains around Grands-Bois."

Thus, freedmen still ferociously hunted down looters, the isolated Maroon, and Maroon bands to such an extent that free blacks and mulattoes earned the reputation of being fervid enemies of the Maroons. In each case, it was, according to Moreau de Saint-Méry, the people of color who "ordinarily tracked down fugitive slaves and were then considered superior locally to any other soldier since, when they take off their shoes, they have the same advantages of the slave who by traveling barefoot can climb even rocks or descend steep cliffs."<sup>101</sup>

In the colonial militia black freedmen and mulattoes were members of companies of colored men whose principal mission was the campaign against marronage. The Royal Ordinance of January 1787 declared in article 38 that "The colored companies in time of peace shall be employed to pursue negro maroons."

Later on we note government use of citizens of color for restoring order and for bringing a halt to slave desertions. In this regard the following document is strongly suggestive of the task expected of the colored companies. It is a circular issued by François Hubert de Thiballier, Colonel 4th Infantry Regiment, commanding troops of the line and the armed forces in the South, July 1792.

To all Commanders of Colored Citizens in the Province. In conformity with the proclamations of the Lieutenant Governor 28 and 29 May, and in support of the beneficent considerations inspiring them and in support of the views of the Minister of the Marine in his official advisory letter on the law of 3 April, it is my duty to bring together and employ all means dependent upon you and those under your command to cause to be returned to their respective work gangs as soon as possible all slaves in your parish who as a result of present circumstances are found to be absent. You are to understand that only the zeal and dispatch you give these preliminary and necessary measures can bring about a prompt and complete return to peace and order. To this end it must be your will as it is your duty to employ yourself in the most effective manner so there can remain no uncertainty whatever about the sincerity and purity of your intentions on this important occasion.

Further, I believe you to be too enlightened about your true interests, too permeated with the grateful submission demanded of you by a law which defines your responsibilities as well as your rights to have need to recommend to you the personal safety of each and every citizen of your parish, and particularly of those who come and return there with confidence

after having been driven away by the harshness of circumstances during the troubles.

In consequence of which it will be, from this moment, expressly forbid for any sugar mill to be operated except for the account of the proprietor; that no colonial products whatsoever be exported from the plantations except by order of the proprietor; that no provisions whether under cultivation or in store be taken from plantations except for the subsistence of armed citizens of color and upon written order of the Commandant of the quarter.

That no outside slave be received at a plantation except by written permission of the owner. It shall likewise be ordered that from this time forward a careful search for animals will be instituted so that they may be returned and restored to the plantations to which they belong, notice having been given the owners. Orders will be issued immediately to the drivers of the various work gangs to have the main roads marked, to trim hedges to a height no more than three feet, to clean and repair irrigation and other canals for the maintenance of both crops and roads.

At every waterfront and wharf there must be maintained the most alert police vigilance so that no colonial product as herein prohibited above may be imported, sold or exchanged in any manner whatsoever. That no slave alight there nor leave without written permission of his master.

That no canoe, boat, whether coastwise or sent by proprietors with written permission be stopped or affronted. . . . One of the principal objectives recommended to your care and implementation is the necessary disarming of the slaves both those spontaneously armed and those obliged to do so by circumstances.

We direct all Commanders of the citizens of color in the various parishes of the South to conform to the present order under penalty of being insubordinate under the law and to the legal authority and in consequence punished.<sup>102</sup>

Freedmen thus found themselves enrolled in the rural police and the militia opposed to marronage and used in the pursuit of fugitives and the stamping out of rebellions. Did not Julien Raymond declare before the Constituent Assembly that they would be misguided "to believe mulattoes crazy enough, possessing as they do a fourth of the slaves and a third of the land, to risk in a monstrous alliance their life and their newly acquired rank of citizen," and at the same time assuring the white proprietors:

What does it matter that you are white? What does it matter that we are mulattoes? We are both proprietors, we both own land and slaves and we are in consequence natural allies.<sup>103</sup>

On different occasions, the same statement will be pronounced by free blacks like Lapointe and free mulattoes, in the tone, at once cynical and sinister, of this appeal of the colored people of Port-au-Prince to those in the nearby surroundings.



In the name of our properties, our wives and children and ourselves now in peril, we urge you our friends to present yourselves without delay to make common cause with the whites. You will be welcomed and our reconciliation with our fathers shall be, we hope, a lasting one.

Signed: A. Moulens, Véraque, Bolieu, Pédrél and Boromé,  
free Mulattoes.<sup>104</sup>

The cause of the freedmen could be of interest only to freedmen. Certainly it was not the slaves' cause. Quite clearly it was a rescue attempt limited only to freedmen, persecutors of Maroons, and thus inimical to freedom for the slaves, whom they, whether free blacks or free mulattoes, exploited without mercy.<sup>105</sup>

It was indeed neither the colonists in their white or red pompoms, nor the copper or ebony-skinned freedmen, nor the sympathy and the ignored prophecies of the "Friends of the Blacks" that made possible the rise of the slaves and the conquest carved out by their own extraordinary courage. It would be unjust and vain to fraction off the merit of this feat and thus to diminish the grandeur and all the purity of the slave's own epic by adding the illusory gift of occasional acts of assistance or of real or supposed contributions to the miracle of his own valiance exhibited at the price of his own sweat and blood.

Who then with impunity could possibly rob the Saint-Domingue Africans of even the minutest particle of glory for founding a nation, a people? By what guile could one sully or fragment so indivisible a glory, that fruit of a liberation so dearly purchased yet so generously shared with those long time accomplices to their forced servitude? Hunted on all sides, tortured, betrayed and rejected, sold by their brothers they had nevertheless, in sweat and tears, risen like a song of glory above the furrows of Liberty. Who would wish to deprive them of the very memory of their secular martyrdom?

What freedmen, black or mulatto, could ever pay that "debt of light" owed the *Maroons of Liberty*?<sup>106</sup> Indeed none; too many divergent interests still separated slaves and free blacks and mulattoes to accord sharper significance to those rather weak examples of racial solidarity and liaison which show through in a still rather shadowy manner. The word "solidarity" had not yet any meaning.

The colonist, in whose major interest it was to divide and conquer in order to rule, carefully nourished an undeclared hatred between slaves and freedmen. The policy of color grafted on this cynical proposal was in the long run so sharply etched in colonial mores that its perfidy, like an odor from the curse of separated brothers, permeated Saint-Domingue.

Above this blind subracism, above such deeply anchored and similar contingencies and ambiguities, the union of Dessalines and Pétion stands out in that sinister darkness like a miraculous star sent to guide our steps toward Independence.

But, having won that independence, we so quickly picked up again, reviewed, improved on, and augmented the perfidious teachings of the white colonist. And that is yet another story—that story of the black and mulatto colonials who were never divided in their continued and merciless exploitation of slaves, since baptized as peasants, the bitter story of Joseph sold by his brothers, or of the ladder with rungs sawed through. . . .



## Status and Occupation of the Proprietors

WHO WERE THE PROPRIETORS, the white colonists, and the freedmen who denounced the action of slaves who opted for marronage? They represented all social positions and every calling or profession. Among them were owners of large and small plantations, owners of sugar mills and indigo farms, planters boasting work gangs numbering hundreds of slaves or a more modest fifty to one hundred slaves, laborers, domestics, and specialized workers.<sup>107</sup>

Specifically, for example: Plantation d'Argout, Daux at Quartier Morin, Delaville at Saint-Marc, Binau, Gallois, Prince de Rohan, Séguineau, Chevalier de Puilboreau, Marquisant at Port-au-Prince, Soisson, Cotard, Rocheblanche, Drouillard, Ségur, Portelance, Suire, Lalanne, Testard, Walch at Haut du Cap, Dumas in Marmelade, Cotard, Bréda, Gerbaud, Caradeux, Dumai, Pays de Lathan at Les Vareux, Comtesse de Butler in Morne Rouge, Vignier at l'Arcahaye, the Despinose Brothers at Cul-de-Sac, Guittau, Coustard, Comtesse de Sparre at Maribaroux, Chabert, Galliffet, La Chappelle. . . .

It was the plantations and factories (sugar and indigo) that had the greatest number of Maroons to declare, common laborers heading the list above the specialized workers and the domestics. Yet these latter were in sizeable proportion in the big plantation houses as well as in town, a reflection of the competition in luxurious living, of which one of the most striking manifestations was possession of slaves in domestic service. Saint-Domingue eyewitnesses reported that most often there were more servants than masters in the colonial mansions. This type of luxury was confirmed by the newspapers on occasions when departure sales or liquidations of inheritance occurred. Here are several examples:

Mr. Mornet, about to depart, offers for sale six negresses one of whom has three children which he will sell as a lot or individually.<sup>108</sup>

Mr. Hudicourt, resident Assistant Surgeon at Port-au-Prince, leaves for France in May with his wife and three children. He has for sale a barber, a pastry cook, a postillion, a valet, a carter, a quadroon dressmaker and embroiderer with her six-year-old child and a good laundress.<sup>109</sup>

Another who is leaving advertises for sale "two males and two females

ten years on the island, all cash or payable in March."<sup>110</sup> At the liquidation of Mademoiselle Dumont's estate the offering was

. . . nine carpenters, nine field hands, and house servants named as follows: Choisy and Aron, hairdressers; Baptiste, Tisbé, Désiré, Vénus, Suzanne, Sophie, Marie-Jeanne, Adée, Henriette, Marie-Louise and her two children, Philis Françoise, and Marie.

In all, the young Miss Dumont had fifteen domestics. There were better offerings at public auction thanks to Mr. Soller, executor of the estate of the late Mr. Alvarez formerly a resident of Croix des Bouquets. He drew the line at nothing, not even, in addition to a battalion of little black girls, an active concubine to be auctioned with her little mulatto boy:

Seven head of negroes or negresses as follows: Marie age twenty-four to twenty-six a laundress, Sophie age fourteen to fifteen, Victoire, twenty to twenty-two, Marie-Claire, thirteen to fourteen, all house-servants; Lindor age fifteen to sixteen, Fantaisie, ten to eleven, both valets and Marie-Louise between twenty and twenty-one, mother of a mulatto boy.<sup>111</sup>

There were many women proprietors, most of them widows who insured the succession of one or more husbands whom they had buried: Mme. Chavoleau at Plaisance, the Widow Chailleau, Mme. Chevert, Mme. Bataille at Fond, the Widow Yvon at Cap, the Widow Cotin, the Widow Perdreau in Léogâne, Mme. de Raymond in Nippes, Mme. Marc of Cavaillon, Mme. Bellanger, the Widows Damiens and Grandjean. . . .

In the freedmen's ranks there were a considerable number of black and mulatto women. It is they especially who acceded to the distribution of property and other wealth in the colony. All indications are that, through the women, the freedmen's class increasingly consolidated its economic status. It is perhaps an exaggeration to credit the freedmen, as has been done, with controlling one-fourth of the colonial wealth, but there is some justification for lending credence to the statement that at auctions they carried off the best homes. They "accumulate capital" and owned "the most beautiful properties in many districts."<sup>112</sup>

Advertisements hardly ever give the occupations of freedmen. All we have are their names: Joseph Gabriel called the Intendent; Mellet, Free Negro of Jacmel; Louis, Free Negro of Dondon; Henriette, Free Negress of Léogâne; Jean, Free Mulatto at Jacmel; Chaviteau, M. L.; Françoise, M. L.; Marianne, M.L., at Léogâne; Bonnefemme, Free Mulatto at Ecrevisses; Jeannette, Catherine, Free Mulattresses; Fillette, Free Quadroon; Nem, Free Negro; Jacques known as Bambara N.L.; Charles, Free Quadroon; Dau, Free Negress, Saint-Laurent, N.L.; Janvier, N.L.; Jérôme, M.L. . . .

Infrequently there is indication that these freedmen were plantation owners.



Runaway Jean Louis, creole age thirty-four belonging to the plantation of Jasmin Thomaseau, Free Negro at Morne Rouge; his mother Nanette, a Free Negress, lives in Mornets and is the wife of Jean-Baptiste Olivier, Free Negro. A maroon escaped from the plantation of Latortue, Free Negro of Rivière Salée.<sup>113</sup>

Their occupations are rarely stated: François, M.L., carpenter at Mirebalais; Marie-Jeanne, M.L. of Verrettes, a merchant. Whenever freedmen carried both name and surname, that is, "Joseph Lebrun, Sr.," this was an indication that they were longtime freedmen who had become rooted and were persons of distinction in the community.

The occupations pursued by white colonists were, by contrast, regularly given. Clearly observable then is the diversity of their social status and repeated proof that marronage was not a phenomenon characteristic only of slaves subjected to hard plantation labor. Not precluded were the well-fed slaves in the inns and bakeries such as, for example, Paul, "twenty years a seller of bread, light-skinned, slightly grey beard, fifty years old," or the Adia woman, Rosalie, who "sold bread on the outskirts (*en plaine*)."

Here then, should further assurance be needed, are some surnames of masters with their professions and occupations: M. Becht, a Cap doctor; Mr. des Brousses, attorney; Mr. Martinet, coffee grower of Cap; Mr. Charles, a sugar-mill owner at Plaine; Mr. Chevalier, innkeeper; Mr. Artau, contractor; Dupin, Cap mason; Prévost, businessman; Cumberteau, a caulker; the Vorbes brothers and Mr. Martin, cabinetmakers; and the surgeon Coulombier at Cap; Surgeon Gaubert of Alcul; Lardy, a cooper; Chapotot, prison keeper in Port-au-Prince; Leberquier, a merchant; the provost Maret at Léogâne; Aumar, a baker; the chevalier Lieutenant Deretz; La Pierre, innkeeper; Dr. Scutt of Léogâne. At Saint-Marc, Couvertier, a tailor; Guiheneux, a cooper; Michel, a notary in Port-au-Prince; François, merchant; Guibert, café owner; Bordier, notary at Cap; Breton, a smelter; de Chamartin, officer; Escoffier and Ponthieu, bailiffs; Troubac, shoemaker; the tailor Lafleur; Duchâteau, a fisherman; Lelièvre, a cane-mill owner; Cheret de Montgrain of Saint-Louis, a Substitute; Hartman, gunsmith; d'Empaire, a surveyor; Saladin, apothecary; Parent, carpenter; Bussière, tanner; Ferdule, blacksmith; Mathurin, coastal sailor; Lacour, carter; Chéron, an engineer; Moulié, doctor; Mrs. Lemoine, Cap midwife; Roberjot, paymaster; Dubuisson, comedian at Cap.

We will complete this wide-ranging sample of masters denouncing runaway slaves adding to the list the governors themselves: Marquis de Fontenelle of Limonade; Archbishop Thibaut, lawyer; the chevalier d'Auvergné; President Bongars; not to mention the Pères de l'Hôpital de la Charité and the other congregations: Jesuits, Dominicans, missionaries, and parish priests, like Father Zéphirin at Cap; Father Irénée, parish priest at Fort Dauphin; Fathers Séraphin and de Pradines in Port-au-Prince; Father Sainte; or even Father Juan Cairate, "parish priest of Inche in the Spanish sector."

Finally, let us indicate the few masters with neither plantations nor professions who nevertheless made a good living hiring out by the day or on short or long lease slaves they had bought at bargain prices from among rejected lots. This was done with an eye to deriving from them a life income after having cared for and "patched them up" a bit. As follows: "For rent, the slave André. Contact Mrs. Chambellan." "For hire by the day Jean-Noël, eighteen, claims he belongs to a resident of Boucassin."

In résumé, if the masters were engaged in a variety of professions or occupations, most of the proprietors owned plantations and field slaves. The abundance of descriptions emanating from the towns and thus from masters with easier access to the press does not result in reversing the very clear domination of field workers over domestics or skilled workers in the runaway-slave advertisements.

#### NOTES, pp. 195-238

1. Mendès-France retiring from business left Saint-Domingue with his daughter Angélique, then seven years old. Prior to his departure he offered for sale "several houses in the loveliest sections of Petit-Goâve." *S.S.A.*, 17 May 1787, and *A.A.* of 27 March 1788.
2. One of these, Edmé-Félix Piver, died at Saint-Marc 14 January 1769.
3. Rossignol Lachicotte had eleven children. Her brother Phillip had many descendants. The ancestor of this Saint-Domingue family was J. B. Rossignol Lachicotte who, in 1690, migrated from St. Kitts to settle in Artibonite.
4. Vaissière, p. 65.
5. Partially edited text of Louis E. Elie, *La vie coloniale à Saint-Domingue*. Personal collection of the author and *Bibliothèque Haitienne des Frères de Saint-Louis de Gonzague*.
6. Vaissière, p. 77.
7. G. Debien and J. Houdaille. *Les origines africaines des esclaves des Antilles françaises*, p. 22.
8. Examples cited by General Nemours or given by Saint-Méry.
9. Hilliard d'Auberteuil gives the number of *méssalliés* in the colony in 1770 as three hundred. In 1790 the colonist Thomas Millet recommended to the Saint-Marc Assembly that it require all mixed couples to take an African name.
10. For many of the Saint-Domingue parishes: Saint-Marc, Cap, Léogâne, Jérémie, Cayes, and others. See the lists of names published in my work *Le théâtre à Saint-Domingue*.
11. Cluade Aubourg died on his plantation at Grand-Boucan 31 December 1781. *A.A.*, 30 January 1782.
12. René Chatelain of Artibonite after February 1768.
13. G. B. Duquayla died at Cayes November 1787.
14. The colonists Deronseray operated a business firm in association with a Mr. Nadeau. One of the Deronseray widows was living in Petit-Goâve in 1781. Her only son was a lawyer in the Conseil Supérieur of Port-au-Prince (*S.A.A.*, 27 February 1781). He died in Cayes at the age of forty-eight, "after having sacrificed his youth to the study of law and to the protection of the widow and an



- orphan boy, enjoying the esteem of all." *Le Courier politique du Cap*, No. 20, 8 May 1791, which reported the death, wrote it as *de Ronceray* and not *Deronseray*, even though people were shedding the particle.
15. There is also d'Hudicourt, a member of the colonial assembly in 1791. See *La Sentinelle du Peuple*.
  16. The name Lavaud was found in a number of parishes. One of them was a church warden at Limbé. The Lavauds were great proprietors in Port-au-Prince, Borgne, and Port-Margot, most of them related to Arnaud Lavaud, Sr., a rich ship outfitter from Bordeaux.
  17. The l'Espinasse family originated, it is said, in Guyana, migrated to Normandy in the fourteenth century, then settled in Maine in the sixteenth century. See G. Debien: "Un prêtre manceau dans l'aventure" in *La Province du Maine*, October 1971. It is the story of Father Pierre-François de l'Espinasse who, like the surgeon, doubtless one of the brothers, lived for a time in Saint-Domingue and ministered the Jérémie parish in 1798.
  18. Plantation Mathon in the commune of Baradères still exists. There were also Mathons who founded a family at Cap.
  19. This family originated in Nantes. The firm Maison Martineau of Nantes was deeply involved in Saint Domingue business and the slave trade.
  20. "Runaway slave Silvie, a Senegalese, branded J. Nadal at Cap, five feet two inches, very dark, part of her right ear cut off. Notify Dr. Nadal, Penthievre Street, the Cap." *A.A.* of 30 March 1779. Jean Nadal, departing in 1781, sold at his home at the corner of Saint-Simon and Penthievre in Cap "several negresses, tradeswomen. Will put together good package." *S.A.A.*, 1 May 1781.
  21. Jacob Pereyra had two sons, Manuel, who settled in Cap, and Raphael, who directed the firm Pereyra Brothers in Port-au-Prince.
  22. A Séjourné was receiver of unclaimed slaves at Fort Dauphin; another was postmaster in the same village. In any case, the Séjournés were more numerous and better known in Jacmel and especially in Grande-Anse. Pierre Léon, in his work on *marchands et spéculateurs dauphinois dans le monde antillais* cites (p. 144) a letter of François Testas dated 12 January 1792 at Jérémie: "The mulattoes . . . led their work gangs in insurrection. They strangled Mme Plengue, her daughter, and three little boys. They indulged in every possible type of cruelty, especially with Mme Séjourné, daughter of Mme Plengue. This woman about eighteen years of age, only one year a wife and eight months pregnant, was strangled, her head sliced, her stomach cut open and the seed she bore thrown to the pigs running about the swampy area." A similar version is provided by Pamphile de Lacroix.
  23. The Cochon brothers were merchants at Cap. The name was also borne by a captain of a slave ship.
  24. The Jumels owned plantations at Saint-Marc and Verettes. In the *Affiches Américaines* of 31 May 1769, there was a fugitive-slave advertisement describing "Michel, a Congo with the Jumel Saint-Marc brand on the left side of his chest, age twelve to thirteen, wearing a neck stock marked as property of Mr. Jumel, resident of Verettes." The name Jumel is frequently spelled *Jumelle*.
  25. For this localization see Sémexant Rouzier, *Dictionnaire géographique d'Haïti*.
  26. Emile Hayot, *Les gens de couleur libres du Fort Royal*, pp. 19, 57.
  27. *Archives de la France d'Outre-Mer*, Oudinot Street depot.
  28. See the work on the history of the descendants of Toussaint Louverture by General Nemours, one of our outstanding historians.
  29. A very old family of free blacks. To our knowledge, Manigat was cited as early as the early eighteenth century as referring to free blacks. In the *Affiches Américaines* of 28 May 1766 we have found "one Manigat, a free black of Fort Dau-

phin," declaring the loss of a reddish brown horse branded M.C. Does the name derive from French stock, or does it come from the Marcorix language spoken by the indigenous people, from *maniga*, which means chief? We should add that, as early as 1743, there was a free black named Manigat, who knew how to read and write. The same Manigat of Fort Dauphin, described above, like all the rich freedmen, owned plantations and slaves. In the *Avis du Cap* of Wednesday, 15 March 1769, there was a declaration of an African turned maroon, "Antoine, a Congo with the Manigat brand on the right chest claiming to belong to one Manigat, free black of Fort Dauphin." Just before Independence, there was at Fort-Dauphin a judge named Manigat and, as we know, a Manigat was mayor of Cap-Français when Hédouville arrived.

30. Probably from Lieutaud de Troisvilles, resident of Les Vases, Arcahaye. A Liautaud married one Marie-Jeanne but nothing in the marriage certificate we examined indicated that this was indeed the illustrious heroine.
31. The author can attest to this, having for ten years lived the peasant life in the Boucassin region and having travelled through great stretches of our rural communities.
32. See Alfred Métraux, *Le Vaudou haïtien*, and Laennec Hurbon, *Dieu dans le Vaudou haïtien*. Of course, not taken into account in this superficial approach is the symbolism of the coloring of offerings or of divinities, of which the great majority of Voodoo practitioners are utterly unknowing.
33. Although a posthumous daughter of Pétion was named Hersilie, the statement of an essayist (whose only trace of originality is that of having been an adept in exoticism) is taken as legend namely, that Pétion as a result of marriage found himself consecrated to the Voodoo divinity Erzulie. Such a commitment, however, did not preclude a true marriage subject, under the most common "contract," to the stipulation that one day per week be consecrated to the goddess.
34. This was not far from the site where the workroom of the Convent of the Madeleine used to be, according to certain historians, among them Pierre Eugène de Lespinasse, in *Gens d'autrefois, vieux souvenirs*, who really had in mind the great house that General Pétion later built there.
35. See Charles Frostin, *Entre L'Anjou et Saint-Domingue*, Bulletin 13-14 of the Société d'Histoire de la Guadeloupe, 1790. In 1777 the name is written Heurtelou in the *Affiches Américaines* for a Léogane businessman interested in the slave business.
36. S.A.S., 15 December 1784.
37. Actually the Marquis Hughes-Barthélémy Alexandre d'Hanache settled in the Gonaïves region. See Françoise Thésée, *Négociants bordelais et colons de Saint-Domingue*, Paris, 1972.
38. *Journal des Débats* of Thursday, 11 August 1791. There are some Dessalines in Port-au-Prince. The Dessalines, a place name added to a patronym, are very numerous in the eighteenth century. Again it must be stressed that *de*, *des*, or *du* were not always indicators of nobility.
39. *Moniteur Général de Saint-Domingue*, 11 October 1792.
40. *Ibid.*, 30 November 1792.
41. In France also some family names derive from first names: Antoine, Henry, Claude. Fouchard or Faubert, according to the *Dictionnaire des noms de famille*, must have been derived from originally Germanic pronouns.
42. Widow de Gislain, originally from LaRochelle, died at seventy at Port-au-Prince in 1756.
43. A colonial anecdote would have it that one day La Pointe offered Bayon de Libertad four thousand francs for the purchase of Toussaint, his former slave, who was then well on his way. It was only a legend to mark "La Pointe's boldness."



44. See Placide David. *Sur les rives du passé*.
45. See Jean Fouchard, Gabriel Debien. "Le petit marronage à Saint Domingue autour du Cap 1790-1791," p. 60, and *Journal Général de Saint-Domingue*, 17 November 1790, 15 February, and 19 April 1791. The celebrated colored actress Minette, who starred on the Port-au-Prince stage was called "the young person." It was only toward the end of her extraordinary career that she was accorded the designation "la demoiselle Minette" (Miss Minnette). She then had house slaves, one of whom, the Maroon Isidore, "claimed to belong to the Demoiselle Minette." *A.A.*, 4 February 1790.
46. *A.A.*, 7 May 1786. The first name, apparently, had been Lartigue before becoming Dartigue. Marie-Catherine Dartigue was a *mestive*, which, in Saint-Domingue, usually meant born of a white father and Carib mother, according to Father Labat's definition. As for the name Mercy, it could have come from the Count of Mercy-Argenteau who owned a plantation in Plaine du Fond on Ile à Vache (*A.A.*, 1782).
47. Céline Ardouin, *Essais sur l'Histoire d'Haiti*, 1865, p. 31.
48. Not to be forgotten is the long series of "Jean" compound names: Jean-Baptiste, Jean-Pierre, Jean-Louis, Jean-François. . .
49. It will be remembered that against the single possibility of enfranchisement through birth generally available to mulattoes, blacks had a score or more ways of obtaining or acquiring freedom, and did so in greater numbers given their numerical superiority.
50. *A.A.*, and *Feuille du Cap*, 23 March 1787. By the terms of an ordinance of January 1789, all residents not living in cities and towns who had a maximum of four slaves were exempt from paying royal and municipal taxes.
51. Moreau, 1, 102, 103.
52. Saint-Méry is certain that from 1770 the floodgates of freedom were opened. Enfranchisements were multiplied for the purpose of fattening the public coffers and the program of "embellishments." In ten years the freedmen's class doubled in number.
53. Emile Hayot, in "Les gens de couleur libres du Fort-Royal," states, "Right up to 1760 we find more marriages of free blacks than mulattoes. They were then actually more numerous and formed more stable families. . . . It is among these blacks that we find the principal notables before 1750." One can suppose that the Fort-Royal situation was typical of all Martinique and perhaps also of all the little French Antilles.
54. J. Saintoyant, *La Colonisation française pendant la Révolution*, tome 1, p. 128.
55. Dakar 1960: Saint-Méry himself speaks at length about "tacit enfranchisements . . . to which the administration closed its eyes . . .", of a sort of "intermediate class between emancipation and slavery" formed by the "quasi-enfranchised."
56. *Saint-Domingue à la veille de la révolution et la question de la représentation coloniale aux Etats-Généraux*, Paris, 1906, pp. 32-33.
57. Saint-Méry (I, p. 111). The historian of Saint-Domingue, let us add, states that "the mulattoes are the most numerous" (I, 103), all the while admitting the existence of "tacit enfranchisements," which to us seems a play on words.
58. Saint-Méry, I, p. 110.
59. II, p. 208. The classic type of slave liberated from his own master was often described thus in advertisements: "For a number of years he has boldly enjoyed freedom simply by claiming to be free." *S.A.A.*, 28 February 1795.
60. Father Cabon, I, 306.
61. "Marie-Rose, five months pregnant, property of M. Rotureau, captain of the Limbé Militia, to whom she belongs despite the sale apparently ceding her to

- her mother, one Magdeleine, a Free Negress, of which he has been so careful as to retain and register a copy." *S.A.A.*, 30 July 1783.
62. In "Destinées d'esclaves à la Martinique."
  63. See Saint-Méry, pp. 411-416 for the long list of miseries and difficulties heaped upon Aloou Kinsou called Masmin, born in 1714 in the Gold Coast, and his wife, Catherine, a Foëda, married at Saint-Domingue, both free, for having tried, by providing a home for them, to ameliorate the lot of enfranchised and liberated persons wandering the streets of Cap.
  64. Jacques Houdaille, "Trois paroisses de Saint-Domingue au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Population*, No. 1, January-March 1963.
  65. "Her slow walk emphasizing the undulations of her hips . . . the whiteness of startlingly beautiful teeth . . . priestesses of Venus in comparison with whom a Laïs, a Phryné, would have discovered their fame vanishing into nothingness . . . the entire being of the mulatto woman is surrendered to voluptuousness . . . to charm all the senses, raise them to the most delirious ecstasies, suspend them by the most seductive delights. That is her sole preoccupation. . . . Nature endowed her with charms, allurements. In Saint-Domingue one sees a rather large number of mulattresses who could change their entire wardrobe every day of the year." Thus wrote Saint Méry (I, 105). His enthusiasm in celebrating the grace and seductive qualities of the mulattress is echoed by all his contemporaries.
  66. Cited by Vaissière, p. 229.
  67. *Moniteur général de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue*, No. 1, Tuesday 15 May 1792.
  68. *Avis divers and Petites Affiches Américaines, Supplément*, of 13 February 1765.
  69. The following avowal by Saint-Méry is stripped of all artifice: "The heat of the climate which fans the desires and the ease of satisfying these will always make prohibitive laws useless" (I, 107).
  70. P. 202, *Island of Santo Domingo*, 1797, by Bryan Edwards, English consul at Cap.
  71. Ardouin, I, 21.
  72. *A.A.*, 22 November 1788.
  73. *Nouvelles diverses and Affiches Américaines*.
  74. *Assemblée coloniale de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue. Procès-Verbeaux des Séances et Journal des Débats*, 25 August 1791.
  75. In general, "colored man" (*homme de couleur*) meant not only the mulattoes or the free Negro long enfranchised and rich enough to be called "colored man," but often any freedman, black or mulatto.
  76. *Journal des Débats de l'Assemblée coloniale* . . . 25 August 1791.
  77. *Moniteur général*, 19 November 1792. Already since the beginning of the eighteenth century there had been, in the small parishes, black militias with black captains, and slaves had always sought this route to freedom. In passing we cite a very sad example: "M. Montauroy, attorney for the plantation of the heirs Cazeau of Cul-de-Sac, declares that the mulatto Joseph, who was found dead the fifth of this month at 4:00 A.M., was a slave on said plantation, but said Mr. Montauroy, having been instructed by his principals to permit the said mulatto his Liberty, authorized him to enlist in the militia in order to earn his freedom after the three years prescribed by ordinance; only two years had passed since he entered service, which is why Mr. Montauroy claimed any effects the said mulatto slave might have left. Besides, most of these rags were procured by his mother, a slave on Plantation Cazeau, who sold chickens and pigs so as to clothe her son, and it is right that the value of these old clothes return to that unfortunate mother who sacrificed herself in order to clothe and support him." *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, Saturday, 20 August 1791.
  78. Proclamation of 13 November 1791.



79. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haiti*, 1, 426.
80. Quite frequently history has had no problem in selecting its purest heroes from among those leaders whose deeds have threaded through the tangle of the most extraordinary contradictions. These contradictions could have been merely tactics. This is the explanation we suggest for Sonthonax who, debarking at Saint-Domingue as a friend of the blacks, proclaimed the continuance of slavery, then, for support, sought to lean now upon the whites, now upon the freedmen, again finally upon the blacks, whose mass liberation he proclaimed. Why is there general refusal to view Sonthonax's contradictions as having been a matter of calculated tactics? Between the just who persevered and the repentant sinner, history more often than not chooses to crown the latter, and the weaknesses of a hero, his very faults, find an explanation and the indulgence demanded by genius. Undoubtedly it is in this light that history will judge Sonthonax.
81. Quotations taken from the Proclamations of Sonthonax and Polvérel in 1793 and 1794. It was the white deputies who, adopting the same tactic, "attempted the maneuver of turning the free blacks against the mulattoes" and incited the former to present the Protest which began with the preamble, "The negro is by inheritance pureblooded, the mulatto on the contrary is a product of mixed bloods . . . a bastardized species. . . . The negro is superior to the mulatto. . . . Pure gold is worth more than its alloy." Sonthonax, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 108-109.
82. *Gazette des Cayes*, 2 September 1792.
83. *Bulletin officiel de Saint-Domingue, Cap*, 7 February 1797, No. 19.
84. *Ibid.*, 8 January 1797.
85. *Moniteur général de Saint-Domingue*, 11 October 1792.
86. Polvérel's Proclamation on general liberty in the West and South, dated 31 October 1793.
87. *Les Marrons du Syllabaire*, pp. 34-43. In colonial practice slave dances, meetings, and ceremonies were often grouped under the designation Voodoo, even if on the occasion these gatherings did not perform the strict rites of true Voodoo religion or expressed only vague forms of varied African superstitious practices or imitations of the mesmerism which the colonists made fashionable after public demonstrations by the famous Count de Pugségur at Providence Hospital. They were so fabulous that in 1791 the count's name was given to a slave ship.
88. *Bulletin officiel de Saint-Domingue*, 28 January 1797 (9 pluviöse).
89. Martin (*op. cit.*, 210) puts at fifteen thousand the number of slaves to be "considered lost" in 1791, in addition to a thousand whites massacred, two hundred sugar mills and twelve hundred coffee plantations destroyed.
90. *Gazette des Cayes*, 18 March, 22 April 1792.
91. "Gens de couleur et colons de Saint-Domingue devant la constituante," *Montréal*, 1951, p. 5.
92. *Mémoire des Administrateurs de Saint-Domingue*, 17 March 1755.
93. *Mémoire sur les prétensions des issus d'indiens et de sang-mêlés*.
94. P. Adolphe Cabon, *Histoire d'Haiti*, Tome II, p. 545.
95. *A.A.*, March 1769.
96. A number of Maroon chiefs were mulatto: Candi, Jérôme, for example, and even Romaine la Prophétesse, according to Madiou, or the Candide who played an active role in the ceremony at Bois-Caïman, not to mention women such as Marie-Jeanne, Henriette Saint-Marc, and others.
97. Rapport de M. de Cambeport à M. de Blanchelande, 7 November 1791, No. 86 of 19 November 1791, in the *Journal des Débats* of the Colonial Assembly.
98. *L'observateur colonial*, imprimerie M. Lémery, Cayes, No. 5, 15 January 1792.
99. *Journal des Débats*, No. 86, 19 November 1791. In his camp at Coupe-à-David Boukman had five cannons.

100. *Moniteur Général de la Partie Française*. . .
101. Saint-Méry, I, p. 104.
102. *Supplément de la Gazette des Cayes*, 1 July 1792.
103. Cited in Jean-Jaurès, *Histoire socialiste de la Révolution Française*, Tome II, and in José L. Franco, *Historia de la Revolución de Haiti*, p. 197.
104. *Journal du Port-au-Prince*, Thursday, 8 September 1791. Bibliothèque Moreau de Saint-Méry, F.O.M., vol. 15.
105. In a confidential letter to his brother Julian, Francois Raymond, appalled, exclaimed: "Great God! Do our interests require us to support an evil cause and to applaud inhuman acts against those unfortunates (the slaves)?" Letter of 1 October 1789. Sannon, I, 87.
106. In remaining linked to Bréda, as if to continue sharing up to the last minute the life of his brothers, was it the intent of Toussaint-Louverture, First of the Blacks, to indicate his disdain for sharing in the life of the freedmen and for being associated with that class, some of whom possessed slaves? A question not to be sneered at, even if later on we see Toussaint, then in supreme command, resort without pity to the whip in his demand for a return to labor and the supreme effort to increase the resources which would insure Independence. On the other hand, could it have been simply chance that free black and mulatto slave owners like La Pointe were dropped en route, blocked out of any association with the Independence as if they were unworthy of being accepted by the masses and hallowed with their confidence for training the cadres indispensable to the final assault? We will describe as a curiosity the version supplied by a "houngan" which, according to oral tradition, would have it that Toussaint, a dévotée of the Arada rites, could not participate in the earliest slave uprisings, which were inspired by leaders of the Petro rites. See Desquiron, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
107. The Foäche group of plantations at Jean-Rabel had eight hundred slaves.
108. *S.A.A.*, 25 March 1786.
109. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, 27 April 1791.
110. *S.A.A.*, 11 March 1786.
111. *S.A.A.*, 6 November 1784.
112. *Mémoire des Administrateurs au Ministre*. This was the situation as early as 1755.
113. A Jean-Baptiste, whom the journal designates under the label "freedman" without the usual description "N.L." or "M.L.," is described as living in Cap at Place de Clugny.



# VI

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## ANALYSIS OF MARRONAGE

## Different Forms of Marronage

THE WORD "MAROON" derives, it is believed, from the Spanish *cimarron*, meaning wild, the word itself coming from the name of an Indian people in Panama, the Symarons, who revolted against Spanish domination. This is the most popularly accepted hypothesis. Several other explanations were offered during colonial days at a time when there was no agreement on the origin of the term. Acknowledging this hurdle the *Affiches Américaines*,<sup>1</sup> during the course of an inquiry engaging the entire colony, proposed for choice a series of hypotheses all apparently logical:

Maroon may have come from *marro*, Spanish noun meaning flight, escape, from which probably we constructed the adjective maroon. The author of a rather long letter has this Creole word deriving from our French word *marauder*. A resident of Jérémie has it coming from the Spanish adjective *marrano*, an epithet applied to wild pigs. Another hypothesis is that the Spaniards who first settled in America believed they owed no more honor to their unfortunate runaway slaves than to call them *Simarons*, that is, monkeys because they withdrew into the heart of the woods.

Following which the editor of the *Affiches*, Charles Mozard suggested a switch from Spanish to English:

The filibusters were Englishmen and Frenchmen. In order to express desertion by the sailors the English used the verb "to maroon," which they must have spread among the French and the Spanish; it must have served as the basis for the words *marro*, *marrano*, *Maroon*. . . .

If there was no agreement about the origins of "Maroon," the meaning of the word was only too well known in Saint-Domingue. It is not surprising that a long inquiry filling a quarter of the gazettes was devoted to this word, so chronic a wound on the colonial régime. The word Maroon has kept its real meaning, that of desertion, a charge to which the slave in his flight to liberty became liable.

Thus we arrive at different forms of marronage, which we will try to examine by establishing a scale of gravity for flights, although all were essentially infractions against slavery, a breaking of the ban and, depending on the



bent of the fugitive's temperament and on the hardships he would have to endure, a temporary or outright rebellion. From the beginning we will of course immediately exclude absences of one night or even two or three days, of which garden and house slaves of both sexes were guilty. These were griots and musicians, lovers of the drum and "expert drumming," young blacks going off to dances and overstaying their time, lovers from different plantations incapable of separating before the sounding bell at dawn who for reasons which reason itself cannot explain decide to go through with a honeymoon. Or perhaps it is the case of a slave who has lost one of his master's tools, or let a horse get away and cannot imagine how he will escape punishment for his carelessness. Caught in an awkward dilemma, he misses roll call, idles along the way, or hides in a cane field.

These unplanned short-lived flights have more in common with playing "hooky" from school than with marronage. Upon the voluntary return of the fugitive slave a simple reprimand or a rebuke of the whip would, from the master's viewpoint, close the matter on such minor infractions. The guilty ones would be accused of vagabondage or lack of discipline. Sometimes they were deprived of the relative liberty of Saturday evening and Sunday, severe punishment for dance lovers and young, gay females deprived of the *calinda*.<sup>\*</sup> And there ended the rather abstracted attention accorded these uncontrollable, hard-to-contain manifestations, imperatives of spirited youth. The proof of this is that the masters never declared these flights representing not marronage but rather slave whims or fears far removed from any dream of some break in their state of perpetual servitude. It is the descriptions of Maroons and runaway slave advertisements that reflect actual marronage. This real marronage, as diversified as it was, could not be classified as full (*grand*) or minor marronage. It would be a fruitless play on words without managing to demonstrate whether or not the fleeing slave denounced by his master had in mind to carry through his desertion. That would be reaching beyond the thoughts of the masters who themselves cried for help and who would have abstained from such action in light of their own experiences, if it were a matter of fugitives already on the road back. All the same, we cannot believe that what some persist in calling minor (*petit*) marronage<sup>2</sup> was for the most part mere slave vagabondage. If cases of this kind existed in contemporary practice—and everything indicates this—we know with sufficient certainty that these short-lived flights were not always the behavior of the individual timid, frightened slave but also of many aggressive, determined slaves feeling their way, groping toward the road to freedom.

From this point on it is difficult, if not unwise, to speak of "petit" marronage with imaginary reservations about the spirit, the character and the importance of an evasion. Especially when we learn that Macandal, Lamour Dérance, and Goman, intrepid maroons to say the least, were frequently guilty of this type of apparently harmless flight, and that the redoubtable Maroon

<sup>\*</sup>Festival days permitted by the masters. Also a dance step.



chieftain Boukman, the most celebrated, the most unsullied of all Maroon heroes, often ran away from the plantation of his master, Mr. Clement.

Can there be any doubt that, from the time of his frequent escapes, Boukman was already nursing his dream of liberating his brothers from slavery? Was it not by dint of these continual "absences" that he succeeded in establishing the extraordinary network of complicity and the careful plan for the general uprising so well conceived and carried out?

Can one believe that in the minds of Macandal, Lamour Dérance, Goman, and Boukman, all habitual recidivists in evasions, marronage was *petit* or *grand*—even susceptible of being thus doubly characterized? Was it, for them, the resultant of an ideal so singularly reduced as to be transformed into a simple, quickly repented wild spree?

Certainly some Maroons did allow themselves to be picked up. Others returned on their own, before the fatal lapsing of thirty days within which indulgence was possible. Beforehand they would make contact with old-timers on the plantation, preparing the climate for return with minimum punishment assured and having their cause pleaded by a district priest or by an old woman close to the master's family. These preliminaries completed, the guilty one would return already stripped down for punishment by the whip. What is more, he would be publicly humiliated. During Sunday Mass he would be on his knees before the church door, begging pardon for "his insubordination to the situation in which God had placed him." The behavior of these hesitant or repentant Maroons was by no means indicative of conscience or resigned obedience, but rather of moral or physical failure. These slaves had not gone maroon with the idea that their escape would be of brief duration. The fact is, they were timid, weak people, faltering in the face of hardships, incapable of enduring the Maroon venture.

Perhaps at the outset they encountered risks such as hunger and anguish apparently too much for their strength. But no one can say that the duration of their escape was calculated in advance. Else, how explain the fact that other similar Maroons, runaways without tools or resources, living on the fringes of plantations, experiencing similar perils, persisted in their marronage without stopping at this imagined parody of flight, which would have been much too dangerous to tempt the imagination of one and all. The Maroon who kept a base close to his place of servitude, who sought shelter from the invalid slaves<sup>3</sup> whom the colonists placed on neighboring fallow land to insure possession pending cultivation; the fugitive who fled with empty hands, who at night turned marauder in search of food or begged sustenance from former companions of his work gang, why at the start would this tentative Maroon (*en lisière*) be characterized as a "petit" Maroon?

He was a fugitive on the prowl. He scouted the terrain. He organized himself. He did not stray very far from those places where he knew help might be obtained. These tactics were not without risk, since he was everywhere sought after and was not sufficiently protected against betrayal and



the discovery of his trail. But, from his point of view to attempt great distance from the very beginning of his escapade was like a leap into the unknown, too dangerous. Perhaps, like so many others, he would be able to live a long while in quite relative secrecy on the outskirts of a large city, linking up with a breadwinner found in the seething mass of homeless vagabonds living by their wits in the faubourgs—porters, laborers and workmen seeking hire or some little perquisites, hand to mouth, awaiting a breakthrough to stability through contacts made in the area. Such was the labor shortage in Saint-Domingue that after a brief period of groping about he would find work on a coffee plantation or in an indigo factory in a distant canton where the white colonial or the freedman would only too gladly overlook the shifty appearance of this libéré. He would employ him at slave rental wages and rather than ask him for information about the confused origins of his liberty he would demand arduous, conscientious and useful labor.<sup>4</sup>

Like all adventures, marronage demanded its share of luck linked with the temperament and courage of the one who decided to attempt it. These factors were at play, although one could not have foreseen the evolution of any case of marronage much less have determined, when the attempt finished badly, that it was simply a matter of a Maroon with little resolution reacting to a change of mood, a too-great susceptibility to emotion. Besides those who could not morally or physically sustain the tradition, how numerous must have been those who succeeded and consolidated an initially most tentative escape.

Among these were Soliman, a Mandingo, absent six months from Limonade and seen at Morne Rouge and at Cap; the creole African Couacou, a mason and several years a Maroon; and others. He is suspected of having gotten away on a coasting vessel and of passing for a freedman in Saint-Marc, Vases, and Boucassin. Eleven blacks in Cap, six months Maroons. It is known that they are in the area about the town of Gros-Morne. A Congo, Sampson, seen selling saltfish at the square in Port-au-Prince; Modeste age twenty-two, a Congo who must be in the city and working by the day. Wearing an iron collar with three prongs she ran away from Mme. Simonets at Cap. Princess, a Nago fifteen days a Maroon, seen selling salt provisions in the market in Clugny. Madeleine, between twenty-two and twenty-four years of age, dressmaker and embroiderer, complexion black, flat nose, white teeth, sagging breasts, brought up in Paris and speaks French well, seen in the Fond area on the plantation of the Butet heirs. They were being tracked down when luck intervened and their trail became confused and vanished without a trace.

Many among them had contacts somewhere, a relative who would not refuse to give shelter and assistance. They found refuge from plantation to plantation in the same quarter. They turned with more confidence to the known relative, and it was these links of family and of belonging to the

same "nation," or else links created by their arrival in the same ship that in the early days brought the most active collusions to a head.

Louis, a thirty-year-old African, five feet four inches, crippled in both feet, ran away sometime ago, son of one Christine a black woman claiming to be free, suspected of being in Dondon. Venus, age forty-five, property of Mr. Recouly, distiller in Cap, presumed to have rejoined her laundress daughter at Port-Margot. Celeste, an unbranded Congo age between seventeen and eighteen, belonging to one Marie-Thérèse Merenda called Marie-Jeanne, lives on St. Pierre Street. This Maroon is presumed to have been taken in by some workman of the same nation. Charles has his natural parts half-eaten away. Suspected of being at Lagrou's, a mulatto in the neighborhood where he was under treatment. An African ten years in the country now a Maroon, "it is suspected that he was debauched by fellow countrymen from the hills with whom he was seen on Sunday evening. [Another Maroon whose flight is made known with the presumption that he was lured away.]

Adonis, a Congo five feet, ten inches, of whom it was said, "it is possible that he has left the area and is plying his trade as hairdresser in another town." Louis, a runaway who, "because he is very intelligent may be hiding his real name and passing for free in places where he is not known." Charlotte, a Peulard, wearing the Papillon brand, property of Mme. Papillon of Cap, "believed to be presently in Port-au-Prince, she frequently changes locations, dresses like a free black." Maurice, a Negro driver, runaway with two carters, René and Cacambeau. He has freedmen relatives in Grande-Rivière. Three hundred livres reward for his return. Pierre, age twenty-eight or twenty-nine, five feet, five inches tall, branded with what appeared to be Sarou on his left chest, "formerly belonged to Mr. Loubau, surgeon, then to Mr. Reinbeau, presently to Mr. Laurent, master wheelwright at Cayes, who acquired him from Mr. Sarou. He is believed to be in the neighborhood of Petit-Trou, also Asile, having a lot of relatives there—four years and some months a Maroon.

Joseph, a creole black escaped from Ouanaminthe. It is believed he has "gone off to Cap where he is doing day's work and that he spends evenings with Mr. Saint-Hilaires' slaves, who have hand trucks near the sea. He also frequents Mr. de Fage's place in Limbé." Charles has a mother in Limbé and a sister at Grande-Rivière. Joseph and Frontin, from the Colette plantation at Jean-Rabel, presumed to have taken the road for Cap. Jean-Baptiste suspected of being in Cap, where he has a mother, or in Trou, where he lived for three years. Michel, called Petit-Jean, a creole from the plantation of one Barochin M.L. at Terrier Rouge, belonging formerly to Mr. Lagrave in Maribaroux, owner of the mother of said black, then to Mr. Fougère, whose name he bears on his chest. At the beginning of the month said black was seen in Port-à-Piment, where his niece, one Marcia, stays, and armed with a counterfeit pass, which he presented to the commandant, saying he



paid his master for the month and requesting a pass to go to the Spanish sector which was refused. Notify the Mourot Brothers.

Finally, here is a typical example of tracks covered through complicity. It is the case of Marie-Louise, an African creole better known as Marie-Gouen, servant and laundress, gone maroon 15 May 1774, running away from the Berson plantation.

Said negress was recently seen in the slave quarters of Messrs. Bibeau and Cuperlier of Petit-Goâve and Antoine Depas at Nippes. We are informed that her father and several of her relatives are free, that they live on a little piece of land located in the heights of Petit-Goâve bequeathed to several of her freedmen by one Bastienne Josèphe a free black woman; that two of her brothers were purchased at a sale by Mr. de Bongars who transferred them to his coffee plantation in the Port-au-Prince area, where said black woman has also been seen passing herself off as free. She lived at the house of said Thérèse, free mulatto of Port-au-Prince.<sup>5</sup>

This form of marronage, facilitated by members of a single family or even of the same "nation," hired by poor whites and freedmen in need of workmen, requires relationships, a network of contacts which new blacks did not yet have. For this reason it was more readily practiced by creole slaves or by those who, after years in the colony, were no longer bossales or new blacks and had become creolized.

However, among both creoles and new blacks, marronage in more and more instances, from the earliest moment of flight takes on the character of an escape toward distant horizons, like a brutal rupture, a deliberate, calculated, determined, organized cutting away. These Maroons did not visualize their breaking away in a transition stage. They relied only on their courage to face the venture. Many of them went off far from the cities toward safe hiding places in the hills or to distant cantons. Some left with a horse or mule or a boat. Others came away with work tools, clothes, food supplies, and even arms. They were determined to organize their own existence and to dearly defend their liberty. The places where at times they were captured, what they took away with them, even the condition of their escape, the itinerary of their flight all indicate a fierce will to free themselves from slavery.<sup>6</sup>

Sometimes they were pushed toward the decision by the hard conditions of their lives, the master's cruelty, the abuse of the managers or of a driver, an injustice they refused to accept, or other incidental causes that hastened their decision to free themselves from bondage. Their option was determined essentially by the need to be free, to affirm "the rights which they derived from Nature, antedating by far the hour and the hand which made them slaves."<sup>7</sup>

The list of these slaves who chose liberty is a long one. They are people of flitting shadows who, with often mutilated stride, mounted toward the

light. Each day in every parish and by the dozens they broke out of their shackles. Step by step, over paths, pursued by the police, they made their way toward the Spanish border or hid deep in the woods. To feed themselves they stole food along the routes. Some found a bit of abandoned land where they planted a little garden sufficient for assuring their subsistence with easy harvests at three-month intervals. Later they would go in search of a help-mate and children left behind at the master's when collective escape had not been possible, or they joined Maroon bands already living in organized communities.

In this latter case, these were usually new blacks, especially laborers, men and women. As for the creole Africans, most of them had a trade. They were hairdressers, bakers, candymakers, masons, sailmakers, roofers, carpenters, joiners, postillions, valets, shoemakers, butchers, goldsmiths, saddlers, sailors, midwives, nurses, commanders, coachmen, musicians, peddlers.<sup>8</sup> To live with any real security they needed contacts in the developed areas. They changed locations frequently, so as to cover their tracks, but when they could not hide out in a distant canton they tried to find work on the outskirts of towns where supposedly they would not be recognized. In short, they tried to disappear by severing all connections with their rejected past without always being able to follow the greater mass of their brothers, the field hands and the new blacks who also had disappeared in isolated mountains towards the coffee factories of the freedmen.

Capture and the resulting punishments did not deter them. The number of recidivists was considerable. Each time descriptions of Maroons indicated that a slave of either sex had suffered an ear or ears cut, the *fleur de lys*\* or the pillory, we can be sure that these were Africans, male or female, previously punished for marronage and who had once more undertaken the venture. In 1783, a Mr. Curet, surgeon at Cap, reported a black woman gone Maroon for the hundredth time: "Rosette, a black woman of average height with a depression in her forehead, gone Maroon the eighth of this month for the hundredth time, waving a knife as she fled."<sup>9</sup>

Are additional examples needed? We can pull them out by dozens from the descriptions that clearly indicate the pulsating appeal of liberty and the irresistible need to break the chains: Lindor a Mandingo, good cook, repeated Maroon; Cupidon, shoemaker, twenty-four years old, four feet ten inches, property of the brothers Vorbes, joiners of Cap, a Maroon since two months ago. The slave Emanuel, Ibo, five years in the colony, speaks English, Dutch and Spanish. He was a Maroon in 1779 and 1780. Marie, a Congo age fifty, her ears cut, picked up in the hills at Cap. Jean-Baptiste, Ibo, left ear cut off, picked up in Bois de Lance. Lise, Congo woman branded Brousse and Bayonne, property of Mme. Lemoine, sworn midwife in Cap who has twice made statements to the court clerk of that city. Said woman is a midwife by trade, wears an iron collar, and has a withered right leg. Jean-Louis called Hector, left ear cut off, three fleurs de lys on his right shoulder



and one on his left. Lafortune, a Mandingo, age twenty-two, five feet three inches, recently whipped, carrying a chain at the end of which is a fifty-pound weight attached to his right leg. . . . In order better to show marronage in the detail and subtlety of methods of organization, we offer here a most interesting document:

Statement made by Mr. Lamothe Vedel about his negro maroons and the facts resulting from their marronage, 6 April 1791: André, a Mine; Paul, Coffi, Couacou, Jacot, Tranquilin, creoles; Cabi, Valeri, Sans-Nom, Casimir, La Fortune, Basile, Phanor, Hilaire, Congos; Catin, Urgèle, Congos; Justine, creole mulatress, listed as maroons since August 1788.

These slaves belonging to Messrs. Lamothe Vedel and his ward Duroy have returned several times since their first marronage, then finally taken off. They have always frequented the heights of Fel. A slave woman belonging to the Chevalier Grégoire picked up at Mr. Dubois', resident of Fel, lawyer for the Lillancourt estate declared she had left a band of maroons belonging to Mr. Lamothe Vedel on the plantation of Mr. Dubois where they have planted a considerable amount of coffee and cotton; said declaration, taken by Mr. Dubois is signed by F. Gregoire and several citizens of Fel. The next day the said Justine was picked up on the Lillancourt plantation and since that time has left again. There has always been reason to suspect that the Negroes were taken in and sheltered in the slave quarters inasmuch as since the month of August 1785, in spite of Mr. Lamothe Vedel's diligence in pursuit no knowledge of their whereabouts has ever been unearthed. During the night Monday to Tuesday March 29, Mr. Duroy went with a neighbor to the hut of Zéphir, Mr. Dubois' valet on plantation Lillancourt, where he found his slave woman Henriette, three years a Maroon. Because of the disturbance caused by this Black [Zéphir] he was prevented from finding out if any others were there although Mr. Dubois assured him that the slave Coffi was there laden with a basket of meat and armed with a gun. Mr. Duroy took his Negress to Mr. Lamothe Vedel who, after listening to his ward, decided to come to Fel to repeat his previous requests to Mr. Dubois to put an end to the confusion his slave was causing in his work gang. As a result of which, Monday April 4 Mr. Lamothe Vedel started out with Mr. Noël, police provost. Outraged by the seizure of the said Henriette at Mr. Dubois' and informed that their master was to return to Fel the Blacks positioned themselves five hundred feet from the plantation and as soon as he was some three feet away the Negro André, stomach to the ground and armed with machete and gun, brought the latter to his cheek. Mr. Lamothe Vedel, unarmed, throwing himself to the far side of his horse cried out to Mr. Noël to send him one of his pistols. Mr. Noël thought it wiser to persuade the Negro to yield, promising him pardon; immediately the Negro trained his rifle on Mr. Noël, holding thus until he was out of pistol range. The absence of such a large number of Negroes causing infinite delay in the work of Mr. Lamothe and the danger to which he was exposed since his runaway slaves were armed and wicked enough to attempt his life moved him to ask the residents of Fel and Sal-Trou to have concern for the situation into which the slow down on his work was

plunging him and to have frequent searches made of their slave quarters. He promised high reward for persons who turn in any of his slaves to him.<sup>10</sup>

In response to the accusations Dubois, by way of correction, had the notarized statement of the slave Rose printed:

We the undersigned certify that this morning at nine o'clock we saw and listened to Rose, a Congo belonging to Mr. Grégoire resident of Cayes, and a Maroon for more than a year, detained and questioned by us as to where she had been during all the time of her marronage. She told us she had spent more than six months working for the Negro Lafoucault of Plantation Lilancour who kept her at his place in the Ploitier ravine where under his orders she planted for him coffee, cotton, corn, etc.; and perceiving that this Negro no longer put in an appearance she had withdrawn to Guillomont Heights. Executed at Fesle on the Lilancour plantation, this 26 November 1789. . . .

My Negress named above likewise delivered to me word for word what she swore to in the presence of the above signed witnesses and further told me that the Negro Lafoucault had also harbored at the same place during the same period a slave woman belonging to Mr. Lamothe and a Negro of Adrien-Mathurin's named Nangout and that they all had worked together or alternatively on said property since the first hurricane of '88 up to the time the receiver gave orders for them to leave promptly and go elsewhere; that Mr. Dubois had undoubtedly seen him since he had had him picked up at his quarters where he was ill to have him put in stocks and that fortunately he had escaped from the hands of Mr. Taupin who was leading him off and had become a Maroon like them so as to avoid punishment Mr. Dubois was preparing for him. My Negress also told me that this rogue had all her old clothes and four gourdes. I informed Mr. Dubois who immediately and in our presence caused to be opened a chest and a box which he had seized belonging to said Negro, in which the woman recognized and revealed to us handkerchiefs bearing her stamp *RS* as she had said and three skirts which she took. . . . I certify I heard the above statement extracted by the Negro Lafoucault from the slave Rose property of Mr. Grégoire and have arrested some Maroons who declared they had persisted in marronage upon the advice of a Black named Nangout belonging to Adrien-Mathurin. This statement being extracted by the same Negro Lafoucault who had had a large garden planted by Blacks belonging to me who were Maroons these fifteen months.

S. Delamothe Vedel

As for the new blacks, examples of their continued escapes are at this point multiplied to the extent that some special attention must be reserved for the marronage of newly debarked slaves, hostile to slavery from the onset. Those who before us have studied marronage have not given proper attention to the escapes of new blacks, most suggestive indeed with respect to the raw, categoric rejection of slavery they represent, or in terms of the complicity from which these slaves must necessarily have benefited. Once



again we are astonished that these very important aspects have not to this point further challenged the curiosity of researchers inasmuch as the new blacks were dominant in Saint-Domingue marronage. The lists follow.<sup>11</sup> Simply to illustrate this chapter with several examples, here is a summary of new blacks publicized as Maroons or captured for the single month of January 1786, or, to be more precise, from 4 to 20 January 1786—a period of a little more than fifteen days:

—A new slave, Thiamba, twenty-four, five feet two inches, doesn't know his name or his master's. A new Congo black, twenty, four feet ten inches, doesn't know his own name nor his master's. A new black, an Ibo, branded Latoison St. Marc, doesn't know his name or his master's. Two new blacks, sturdily built, carrying marks of the country on their faces, unable to tell their names or the master's name. Three new Congos, I. Fleury brand, unable to tell their names or that of their master. Five new Congos, four of them carrying the brand *V. Piron* and the other, stocky, red skinned, showing on his buttocks the brand of the vessel *Usbeck*, ran away in a boat on Sunday night the first of the month. A new Negro of the Kiffe nation with pierced ears detained at Vieux Bourg. Two new Negroes of the same nation branded Delagrangé, picked up at Fredoches. A new black, a Congo, with the Gautier brand, wearing an iron collar, brought back from the Spanish sector. A new black, a Congo, picked up in Vallière.

—A new Mandingo black, four feet, eleven inches, brought back from the Spanish sector.

—A new black, a Congo branded *F*, brought back from the Spanish sector.

—A new Negro, five feet, one inch, age thirty, brought back from the Spanish sector.

—A new Congo black, five feet, age twenty-five, brought back from the Spanish sector.

—Two new Congo blacks, Maroons since the third current, with a third Negro who enticed them from Port-Lance plantation, Quartier Marin.

—A new Negro, nation unknown, carrying the Lalanie brand, unable to tell his name or that of his master.

A new Negro branded Bargues, age forty-five, height five feet, picked up at La Soufrière.

—A new black picked up at Bonnet.

—A new black branded with a *V.S.*, light-skinned, picked up in Limonade.

—A new Negro picked up on the twelfth, age eighteen, doesn't know his name or that of his master.

—A new Negro woman, Caradeux brand, unable to give her name or her master's.

—Thomas, can't give his master's name.

—A new Negro of unknown nation, branded Lalane.

—A new Congo, age twenty-two, five feet, one inch, well built, handsome face, runaway from Pointe de Léogâne.

—A new Black branded *M.N.*, age twenty-eight, brought back from the Spaniards. A new Congo black, wearing the marks of his country all over his body, brought back from the Spanish.

—Orcan and Backa, new Mandingans, branded Legrand, runaways from Ecrevisses.

—Two new male slaves, Minas, runaways from Fort-Dauphin.

—Two new Nagos and a Taquoua, unable to give their master's name.

—A new female slave, branded Dubuisson.

—A new Sosso Negro, branded G. Lace above Saint-Marc.

This little score sheet of marronage by new blacks for a period of approximately fifteen days is, without doubt, sufficiently eloquent to obviate any need for adding to it the probably large number of *bossales* already creolized, whom we deliberately set aside without attempting to recall that it contains only Maroons declared by their masters or runaways never recaptured. In fact, this form of evasion—marronage by new blacks—far from being a manifestation of the truant school, is positive evidence of true marronage, hostility to slavery. How conjure up still again some vague predominance of short-lived runaways, when marronage was committed predominantly by new blacks, a great many of whom were newly debarked and ignorant of the language and geography of the country?

Finally, there were those Maroons who lived in organized bands in the mountains. Periodically they came down to the plains to steal provisions, pillage warehouses, and carry away livestock. These unceasing raids were sufficiently alarming to inspire in advertisements of sales the following type of assurance: "For sale two adjacent plantations with more than forty houses on them, excellent for coffee growing, located at the foot of Grand Bois mountain; they are secure from incursions by Negro Maroons."<sup>12</sup>

On the way of life and the development of the collective, organized, and aggressive marronage so threatening to the security and property of the privileged, we will return at length in the historical account of marronage. These bands were constantly fed or reinforced by desertions of certain groups of slaves preferring the greater breath of a liberty so long withheld, so passionately denied. How could they otherwise have kept their cadres alive?

We move on now to other questions equally interesting: How and with whom did the Maroons run away?



## How and With Whom the Maroons Ran Away

MAROONS, using every guileful resource, made their escape by day and night, by small boat, mounted or afoot, by land or sea, individually or in groups, carrying provisions or "completely naked," with or without a cent.

It would be difficult to circumscribe in their wide diversity the circumstances surrounding these escapes of which all slave owners were victims. Not even generals or prisons were immune to marronage:

A well-built black, hairy body, especially the legs; he is recovering from an inflammation of the lungs and has plasters on his left side. This negro belongs to the General. Hector, a Congo arrested on the fifteenth, escaped from jail the twenty-ninth, brought back the same day. Pierre, called Démaré, age forty, escaped from the Port-de-Paix jail. Notify the Executor of High Justice. Another Pierre escaped from jail is searched for by Mr. Gascary, prison keeper. Madeleine, age thirty a creole, property of Jacques Drouillard M.L. of Matheux escaped from the Mirebalais jail.

There are runaways by sea, who flee by small craft or rowboats, braving a thousand dangers in the search for some shore where one might have leisure to be free. Some were picked up clinging to a rock after being shipwrecked. Others, thanks to the winds, were caught off Jamaica shores. As they set out on their venture "over liquid routes," none knew for certain where they were headed. It is hardly likely that they knew of the existence of, much less how to reach, the little island of St. Vincent, where groups of Maroons had succeeded in establishing themselves as free people among the Caribs whom very quickly they dominated. In search of a land of freedom they took to the open sea, at the mercy of the winds, trusting their dream to the fragility of a boat.<sup>13</sup>

Of all the desperate attempts the slaves decided upon to escape from bondage, these were virtually suicide operations. We can guess the dramatic aspects of these flights in evident search for liberty:

—Pompey, a Congo sailor, runaway from aboard *Les Trois Amis*. Salomon, Senegalese, jumped ship from the schooner *La Petite Lise* of Jérémie. Jacques,

a deserter from the brigantine *Lionne*, arrested on the outskirts of Borgne. A black who escaped by jumping overboard from a vessel anchored in the roadstead off Saint-Marc. A slave at sea in a pirogue seven leagues from Jérémie.

—An Ibo, Antoine, no brand, age twenty-four, five feet, picked up at sea in a rowboat near Jamaica and brought back to Môle.

—A Congo, Pierre-Louis, and Guillaume, an Amine, runaways in a mahogany rowboat.

—The creole Maurice "wearing a bandage, in a little boat with a trunk full of effects."

—Four blacks gone maroon in a rowboat fully rigged.

—A young Congo, age twelve to thirteen, runaway in a pirogue made of a single piece of cypress wood with a paddle and a bit of tarpaulin.

—Manuel gone maroon "in a small sloop."

—Three Negroes fled in a brand new mapou\* rowboat at dark of night.

—A vessel bound for Saint-Marc sights "two negroes on a rock following their shipwreck."

—A Sosso, Charles, age twenty-two, after fifteen years in Guadeloupe spends a year in France, is sent to Saint-Domingue and escapes from the ship. Said Negro is a hairdresser and has the marks of his country on his face.

—Two new blacks from Gold Coast, no brand, escaped from aboard *Le Lion*, a slave vessel. Notify Lory Plombard in Cap.

—Jean and Honoré, Bambaras, both the property of one Jean-Baptiste Grammont, N.L., of Caracol arrested in Tortuga.

—Dalman, an Ibo, and a Mandingo, Jean, thought to have left Saint-Marc in a rowboat with some American sailors en route to Port-au-Prince.

—Harry, a Senegalese sailor, escaped from the English brigantine *La Catherine*.

—Six Congos, four with, two without brands, gone maroon from Gonaïves on the night of 31 May in a mapou rowboat carrying two sails and oars. A new Negro, a Malimbé runaway with fourteen or fifteen other blacks in a stolen rowboat.

—Congos Médar and Jolicoeur, suspected of having been abducted by the occupants of a rowboat, set out from Petite-Rivière.

—Three blacks stole a rowboat at the entrance of Baradaïres Bay and joined four black sailors belonging to Mr. Pascal, a coaster.

—Achille, a creole hairdresser, age thirty, turned Maroon. He has been seen with a mulatto who proposes to blacks on their way to the roadstead with vegetables to take them aboard a vessel. . . .

Some of these flights suggest the complicity of professionals at slave evasions, contraband sharks and touters with enticing promises. This does not rule out unaided escapes, even rebellions, mutinies and plots organized at sea



by the slaves. For example, there was the mutiny of colonist Lavalette's slaves whose dramatic adventure is given as follows:

The King's corvette *Le Ballou* anchored at Cap the seventh of this month. She had been sent from Martinique to bring the slaves of one Lavalette who had sailed from Cap in a vessel he owned and in which he planned to return to Fort-Dauphin along with Mr. Sicard a rich, veteran colonist who had embarked there with a little mulatto boy and a young servant. The blacks who were sailors aboard the vessel conceived the project of assassinating their master and Mr. Sicard and tossing them overboard. They carried out this heinous crime. Not knowing what next to do they trusted to the winds which carried them to the English island of Tortol where they were arrested, sent back to Martinique and thence to Cap there to be executed.<sup>14</sup>

By order of the Conseil Supérieur du Cap dated 28 October Jean-Pierre age fourteen was condemned to be hanged and burned (he was Mr. Sicard's young domestic). As for the actual authors of the crime the blacks Léveillé, Pharaon, Mercure, Luc and Azor, they "were condemned to apologize with a sign board.\* The first two were then to have their right hands cut off as their master's assassins and all five were to be broken alive and to die on the wheel, their bodies thrown in the fire and their ashes to the wind."<sup>15</sup>

The slaves who fled over roads to the mountains, to other towns, toward distant cantons, or to the Spaniards were of course more numerous. They will be mentioned, with specific attention being given either to the booty which they carried off in their escape or to the places where they were retaken.

Generally, the slave ran away alone. Less often but nevertheless fairly frequently there were group runaways whether by land or sea or from ships in port:

—During the night ten or twelve Mandingans—masons, joiners, bakers or confectioners, all rather young, from twenty-two to twenty-six, fled from Mr. Roy's, a contractor in Cap.

—Two males and a female ran away from Mr. Parret's of Port-au-Prince.

—A Bambara woman and six males, Fons, Cangas, Mondongos, deserted Mr. Thibaut's plantation in Plaisance all at the same time.

—Five black sailors pulled away from Baradares Bay in a rowboat.

—The public prosecutor of Brousses complained of the desertion of four creole and Arada slaves.

—The cruel Lejeune of Plaisance lost three Congos at the same time.

—Mr. Denugon of Mirebalais was searching for Louis, Jacques, Marie-Claire, all creoles, and Agathe, a Congo; Mr. Bernardon of Vareux was searching for the Nago Maurice, Alerti, a Mondongo, and the Congo, Clement.

\* Convicts were often exposed in public with a placard on which their crimes were noted.

—A blind man, age forty, and Angélique, his forty-five-year-old companion were brought back from the Spanish sector.

—Mme. de Raymond of Petit-Trou de Nippes announced the flight of seven of her slaves, Congo, Cotocoli, Mondongo, Agauia, creole; one completely nude, another with a gun and machete.

—Michel, a notary, tried to recapture Arnotte, a creole woman, fled with her two mulatto sons, Jean and Jean-Baptiste, ages twenty and twenty-five. Sans-Quartier, Janvier, Ignace, Titus and Alexandre [who are] Nago, Congos, creole and Caplaous escaped from Madame Dufay's plantation at Grande-Rivière.

—From Port-à-Piment there was announced the flight of eleven blacks, property of Delarue Le Goux.

—In Cap, Rose disappeared, also her daughter Magdeleine age twenty-two and the latter's child, a little boy of two years.

—Five new blacks escaped together from the wharf at Caracol. Six others—Congo, Ibo, Mina and Mondongo, escaped from Mr. Thézan's in Port-au-Prince.

These examples, which we could have amplified, were drawn at random from a summary of Maroons for the year 1783.<sup>16</sup> We are thus aware of the frequency of group escapes. They would further increase in 1791, a period during which we find considerably more group desertions from work gangs as the general revolt drew nearer, as evidenced in these examples from the months of June and July:

Jean-Louis a creole black and premier driver, no brand, has run away from Ganetière near Port-au-Prince along with ten men and women slaves belonging to Mr. Robert.

Sentence without appeal of the Seneschal's Court of Port-au-Prince condemning a black and a mulatto slave from the Fortin Bellanton plantation in Cul-de-Sac to be broken and six other Africans of the same plantation to be hanged for murdering the commander and forcing the work gang to revolt.

In Grande Feuilles, dependency of Jérémie, nine strong males of the Bambara and Mandingo nations and two women a total of eleven slaves have gone Maroon from the plantation of Mr. Kanon, citizen of Jérémie.

Nevertheless, individual flights were the most frequent due to the very fact that marronage was ventured more often by new blacks without benefit of extensive ties. Quite often, the slave seems to have hesitated in the face of the danger implicit in an evasion and the possibility of a denunciation which would cause the aborting or delaying of his or her project, and bring on terrible punishment.

Group flights were by families, mother and children, husband and concubine, an entire family, or even a group of slaves of different nations joining



together for a collective escape. For example, some drivers ran away with a group of slaves. Rarely did a driver escape alone. Almost always it was during the night that field slaves and factory workers ran off. House slaves, when they did not practice a craft that freed them from surveillance, had the option by day of being on commission. One such slave had, on the very day of his flight, killed a pig he had been fattening for months.<sup>17</sup> A clever trick to allay any suspicion. Others who could read and write faked letters indicating that their masters had sent them out on a job. Armed with fake or genuine pass, they could move about freely, immune from constant police controls. These letters served so well as alibis that a printed form was devised which reduced the number of counterfeits and simplified matters for the many poor whites who couldn't read or write. An announcement "addressed to the inhabitants" gave full details about these notes:

In order to prevent the unfortunately too frequent counterfeiting of Slave Passes and for the convenience of the inhabitants several people have had some of these printed in the following form:

"Pass this Negro (or this Negress) to whom I have given permission to go to ——— and return to the plantation ———

On ——— this ——— 17

On ——— this ——— 176

So that Negroes will not so easily lose these passes they are printed on paper  $5\frac{1}{2}$  by  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . They are priced at thirty livres a thousand or four *escalins* the hundred.<sup>18</sup>

Not too much is known about why this attempt was short lived. The evidence indicates, however, that Maroons continued to use hand-written passes, legitimate and counterfeit, faked declarations of liberty and enfranchisement, faked baptism papers and certificates of all types which, with cleverness and luck, made it possible convincingly to carry off, as they used to say in the colony, "the role of a free black." The colonists never ceased requesting the arrest of blacks "regardless of passes they might be carrying since these blacks know how to read and write."

Michaut claims he is searching for some stray horses and under the pretext of having lost the one he got from his master requests passes for his moving about.

Cupidon, a Nago, two months a Maroon had been sent on a job from Cap to Gonaïves with an eight-day pass. Creole Elizabeth Jenny, unbranded, age seventeen, five feet two or three inches, a very pretty face, eight months pregnant. She stole four dozen napkins from her mistress Mme. Mathon de Brottes. She is to be arrested regardless of the irregular baptismal certificate she is carrying.

—Lindor, a creole, had an eight-day pass.

—A Congo black, a hairdresser, missing with an eight-day *billet d'herbages*.\*

—Request was made to arrest four Maroons "although they carry passes."

—Prince, a creole baker embarked in the Limonade passage, had no pass from his master.

—Pierre, a creole runaway from Chevalier, the innkeeper, with a pass.

—A Congo hairdresser, Jean, by virtue of his intelligence good at passing for a free Negro. Stole twenty-five French gold louis from the chevalier Deslandes.

—René, twenty-four- to twenty-five-year-old creole, left the Laverne plantation at Mirabalais armed with a passport she must have found plus one she already had.

—Jean-Louis, hairdresser, armed with a fake pass or freepaper which supposedly was given him.

Some Maroons changed their names: Lafortune, claiming to be a free silversmith often changed his name. Scapin took the name Etienne. This Congo, Scapin, has been a fugitive for three months and has some female contacts at Cap near Bac. Bontems, a Mozambique, frequents female company near Trou and changes his name often. Rosette, a creole previously sold under the name Agnes.

Some women in flight disguised themselves as men: Félicité, very tall, with white skin spots, suspected of disguising herself as a man and of hiding out on Mr. Arthaud's little place next to the hospital. Fatine, a griffone, supposedly free, perhaps even disguising herself as a man, sometimes poorly, sometimes well, dressed occasionally barefoot, at other times wearing shoes.

Many, with no proof claimed to be free, especially mulattoes taking advantage of a skin color that played in their favor, and acted out this status. Some claimed to have been granted freedom in reward for active military service.

—The creole Claude, five feet seven inches, a violinist and good shepherd, for three years a Maroon, claims to be free though the property of Mr. Lemeilleur Dumornet of Trou Caïman.

—Jean and his mulatto brother, ages twenty and twenty-four respectively, hairdresser and postillion, unbranded, Maroons since fifteen days ago, passing for free men under the pretext of having participated in the Savannah Campaign\*\* under command of Count Estaing. Messrs. Lory, businessmen in Cap, to be notified.

—Joseph Antoine, claiming to be free in recognition of having served the King of Spain during the stay of Spanish troops in Cap, picked up on Vigie Hill wearing a two-pronged iron collar.

—Jean-Phillipe, passing for free and living in Léogâne. A black woman passing for free; she had been bought at the Fort-Dauphin jail.

\* A pass to go out gathering fodder for animals.

\*\* U.S. War of Independence.



Sometimes the clothes worn by the Maroon revealed his condition, whether he was a domestic or field slave, attached to a wealthy colonist or the property of a poor white. Some Maroons wore their Sunday garb during the height of the day: white shirt and calico shorts. Some wore hats and shoes. For their flight field slaves, we suspect, would have preferred to wear the best they had. Was not the correct dress appropriate for later acting out the role of a free person? Other slaves were not able to prepare accordingly, either because they had only their work rags or because the hasty circumstances of an escape did not permit improvement in dress. We find them "entirely naked" or covering the nakedness with only a simple candale:<sup>19</sup>

—A black belonging to the General, wearing a shirt and long gingham pants with red and blue checks and a red-and-blue-striped handkerchief. Three new Sosso blacks, gone maroon on the eighth from Agréable Vue, Prat Desprès' property, located on Morne de l'Hôpital, near Port-au-Prince. Notify Mr. Prat Desprès at above address (an area presently called Bellevue-Desprès). These slaves are dressed in brown cassocks, wear long beards.

—An Ibo, Mars, a runaway with an iron helmet.

—Modeste, a young Mesurade, dressed in a linen shirt and gingham skirt.

—Zamore, a Congo cook, quite stout and very nimble, runaway, with a bundle of clothes for changes.

—A new Bibi black, dressed in new gingham shirt and Cholet\* shorts.

—Pierre-Paul, a creole, wearing simple shorts of coarse linen.

—A new Congo black, gone maroon with two changes of coarse linen and a white handkerchief with little blue squares.

—César, an eighteen-year-old Congo, dressed in a military coat and gingham shorts with small squares pattern and a red handkerchief on his head.

—The Congo, Neptune, ugly face, sheepish in appearance usually wearing an old jacket or soldier's coat of white duck, is a charcoal vendor and dock hand, wears the marks of his country on his chest.

—Couacou, Quiamba, and a Congo, Françoise, both carrying two or three complete changes of clothing. Zulmis, age twelve, dressed in new duck shorts and gingham shirt.

—Joseph, twenty-five years old, Congo, wearing a coarse shirt and long linen pants. Joseph Antoine, speaks French, passes as free, neatly dressed, wearing shoes.

—A new black walked away from the La Fossette Shops covering himself with a woolen waistband.

—A Poulard, Joseph, runaway, wearing his blue livery coat with red trimming, collar and shoulder-boards trimmed in gold; he has or might have a sword or saber with a copper hilt and guard.

—Silvain, a mulatto, usually wears a handkerchief on his head; his hair is

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\* Material made in Cholet.

short and curly. A saddler by profession, he is literate and passes as free man.

—Thisbé, a new Congo, carrying the ship's brand *L.P.A.* on her left arm, the first two letters being interlaced, dressed in a man's linen shirt and a gingham skirt.

—Four new blacks arrived in the country six weeks ago. Each wears a full white or Breton linen shirt; three wear coarse linen, and one, fine quality linen culottes; all wear hats.

—A young Ibo dressed in a large patterned gingham shirt with a white linen collar and a blue head handkerchief stamped *D.M.L.* in interlaced letters.

—Two new blacks from the cargo of the *Rosalie*, presently on sale wearing gingham shirts with a pattern of blue checks, linen shorts, big black hat and white hat with red and blue checks.

In addition to linen and other clothing, slaves carried off food supplies to assure their existence for the first few days: Zamore, a Congo cook, escaped with a basket of provisions. Others escaped with a sack of biscuits, a supply of oil, and other items.

Examples of thefts of food supplies are rarely provided. Certainly, the masters could not be robbed of food supplies which they never or seldom kept for distribution. Could another factor have been that the runaways, instead of loading themselves down with supplies, preferred to depend on pillaging gardens close to their hiding places or perhaps on getting help from friends and acquaintances?

Nevertheless, some Maroons took with them the spoils of pillage, thereby providing means for future bartering or for meeting immediate needs—linen, tools, "ironwork, hatchets, bill hooks, knives."<sup>20</sup>

—Venus, a Foeda woman, gone away with valuable merchandise from one Marianne Montbrun, M.L., a merchant on Place de L'Intendance in Port-au-Prince.

—Comet, a Congo peddler, eight months a Maroon, with a packet of merchandise.

—Hélène, a creole, carried off "about twenty-five morning wraps, thirty or forty handkerchiefs, a number of other items and Charles, a black known as Jean Baptiste."

—Jean, a Cap creole age twenty-five to twenty-six, left with a fake pass. He was seen in Dondon with a mare loaded with merchandise. (Similarly, black carpenters, roofers or coppersmiths, declared as having run off with all their tools.)

—The Congo Barthélémy, age thirty-two, escaped from Plantation Cazin de la Brosse on Montagne Noire with a whip, a pruning knife and a cutlass. Couaminan, an Aguaia, and the creole Alexander, a light-skinned cook with a slight beard and speaking excellent French, escaped from police officer Mr.



Robert with a variety of merchandise consisting of hardware, dusting powder, handkerchiefs, and cigars.

—Télémaque, a Mesurade, in the colony since childhood escaped with his linen and a machete.

Some ran away with mounts so as to facilitate their moving about:

—Guiget, a one-eyed black woman of thirty headed for the plain with a she-ass and an eight-day pass. No news of her in eight months.

—Jean-Pierre retrieved with a mare and a stubborn little ass.

—Creoles René and Ambroise left with a horse, machete and pistol.

—Pierre-Louis, a mulatto slave, white shirt, gingham pants, mounted on a gray mare.

—César, carried off a ram and a loaded pack mule.

—Jean, escaped with two horses he was leading to water.

—Amérique, an Ibo, escaped with a saddled and bridled horse.

—A runaway slave who carried off two untamed mules from the Spanish coast.

—A black woman and her two mulatto daughters, "all three without brands and never having felt the lash left with all their linen, several articles, and a tamed mare."

—The Arada, Adonis, ran off with a mule.

The boldest ones, determined to stand against all obstacles, escaped with arms to defend their liberty or with fowling pieces for hunting guinea hens and other small game:<sup>21</sup>

—The creole, Etienne, a cook and son of a freedman formerly the provost of the armory in Cap, three weeks a Maroon, wearing an iron collar, carrying arms and carrying the marks of his nation on his face.

—Jean-Baptiste, called Lindor, age twenty-five, armed with a pistol and a saber marked *Agenois*.

—Jean-Louis and Jacques, Congos, twenty-two and twenty-five respectively, picked up a league off Limonade in a boat, armed with two oars, a gun, a full powder bag, a sack of biscuits, and two worsted blankets.

—Three blacks, one a driver, escapees from Plantation Fessard, parish of Port-au-Prince, "after having smashed furniture and buildings, seized all the firearms and all munitions, taking with them fourteen other plantation blacks."<sup>22</sup>

—A new black picked up with a gun.

—A creole, Joseph, armed with a machete.

—A Congo nouse slave, Saint-Jean, a runaway taking with her a machete with a horn handle pierced at the end.

—Gahoult, carried off a rifle, powder, lead, and balls.

—The Poulard, Joseph, believed to be carrying a machete or saber with a copper hilt and guard.

—A Thiamba black, carried away a gun and hatchet.

—Zabeth from Plantation Pivert in Saint-Marc, wearing an iron mask.

From African times the favorite game of the blacks was the traditional stick bout—a violent contest requiring for victory a combination of skill and the strongest of arms. Likewise, the slave's inseparable tool was his machete, which he embellished when possible with a horned handle, sharpened with love, and held in affection as though it were a faithful companion. Hence, the militia hunting runaway slaves first armed themselves with gun and ball, and expeditions against Maroons were always completely organized.

In addition to the lists of slaves condemned to death for having killed their masters or mistresses many Maroons were described as bearing arms or arrows, which, from their African days, they had known how to make themselves. Without doubt this detail was not always made public to other slaves, also armed, perhaps for fear of discouraging in advance those who from time to time might, either for the reward or simply for reasons of solidarity, take part in the hunts. In any case, if the slave had carried off a gun just for hunting and securing fresh game, we can believe he did not refrain from using it in defense. There is considerable evidence of saber and firearm wounds suffered by Maroons captured and taken to jail. In such cases there can be no doubt that the captures were difficult and effected only by dint of carbine and hand-to-hand fighting.

After considerable research in the National Archives in Paris, Pierre de Vaissière concluded that “. . . curiously enough many of the blacks were armed.” Already in the earliest days of colonization Father Dutertre had declared that Maroons “boldly raid the plantations and take everything. Some even manage to make off with their masters' swords and guns.”<sup>23</sup> And Father Labat tells of Maroons wounded or killed when they refused to surrender at the time of capture:

When they are surprised in the woods or in flight they may be fired on if they refuse to surrender; if they are taken after being wounded, so long as not mortally so, the reward is the same (500 pounds of sugar). If we kill them we are cleared upon making a statement under oath with the official of the area or with the clerk having jurisdiction.<sup>24</sup>

Father Margat of Cap confirms the practice of arms use by Maroons:

There are even times when having been able to procure arms they band together during the day, set up ambushes and fall upon passers-by; so much so that it is often necessary to mobilize sizeable detachments to stop their highway robberies and bring them back to duty.<sup>25</sup>



To demonstrate the frequency of this use of arms by rebel slaves one resident, a Mr. Mignon, complains in these terms in 1727:

We give them liberty to go hunting for us and so we provide them machetes, ball, powder, lead. Who prevents them from stockpiling these and from assembling two to three hundred in each sector and using their mess time while some five or six leagues away, who I repeat will prevent them during that time from making the rounds of plantations and carrying off the remaining arms to arm other negroes! . . . The blacks would have to be extremely dull-witted not to attempt to recover by force their liberty.<sup>26</sup>

The Africans will prove—and with what ardor!—that they were not by any means “extremely dull-witted” and Mr. Mignon will have been credited with having foreseen as early as 1727 the extraordinary epic of the Saint-Domingue Maroons.

## Maroon Hiding Places; Sanctuaries, Asylums

SECURE HIDING PLACES were not lacking in the colony with its still-vast stretches of woodlands and the ubiquitous mountains which ringed most of its parishes. To these advantages were added the relative proximity of the Spanish border, collusion based on fellowship and common interests, the anonymity of the swarming crowds in the suburbs of the large cities, the system of transportation between parishes by land or sea, and finally the disappearance of all fugitive traces over the long marches to distant cantons or mountain heights sheltering organized bands.

The choice depended on the temperament and the capabilities of the Maroon, as much as on the evolution of the escape. If, in spite of these safe hiding places we note there was "an important number of maroons captured," it must not be forgotten that the descriptions are mute on the matter of numbers, as they indicate neither the number of Maroons not recaptured nor, especially, the total number of slaves in marronage. These advertisements, important as they might be with their examples conveying, after all, the most suggestive approach to the ways and means and the development of marronage, are only indicative in nature. As it is, they reveal (and here we need not invoke the dangers inherent in such a reduced sampling) that the task of recapturing all the fugitives was a striking failure.

As previously shown, the number of Maroons vanished and impossible to trace is considerably greater than that of slaves captured during flight. For the unadventurous, too timid, reflective slave, the closest hiding place was on the very plantation where he had decided to break discipline by henceforth refusing to work for and to be dependent on a master. He remained hidden in the cane fields, finding refuge in the still-fallow plantation areas where old slaves grown gray with service were closing out their lives as watchmen for the land. The network of complicity thickened to extend itself to meetings at night with former comrades in the field. It was not rare for the fugitive thus to find possible help for supplies, even a hiding place for sleeping in the slave quarters. He would give his services to the driver, paying him thus for his silence or he would help a brother in the watering and transplanting of his personal garden. They would secretly provide him with food against the day



when he would decide to do his stealing afield on his own, so as to escape when possible this fragile, dangerous existence full of anguish, secret comings and goings and of incessant precautions in a collusion about which there was no surety as to duration and completeness of loyalty.

For temporary short-term hiding places, there were also the suburbs of the major cities. For the slaves who lived in the environs of Cap or Port-au-Prince, the populous quarters, the markets located at city gates, and the faceless crowds of the ports offered the possibility for moving about rather freely among deck hands, carters, slaves on commission, male and female vendors, notions salesmen, and sailors, while acting with assurance the role of freedman.

Whether it was in the vicinity of Fort Saint-Clair, of the port or market of Croix des Bossales in Port-au-Prince, in Fossette, in the Bac section or the Hôpital des Pères, at Crévisse, Champs Elysées, in Camp-Louise behind Casernes, in Carénage, Mornet, Gris-Gris, Picolet, Cap, or its environs, the fugitive immersed in the crowds enjoyed anonymity while awaiting occasional employment. In this floating population some of the idle lived hand to mouth and by pillage. In the winding alleys of this underworld lived the mob, passionate gamblers and brawlers, existing by theft.

In Cap, Little Guinea was such a neighborhood, with its inns and shady cafés where bad characters and the dregs of prostitution gather. There, shelter and work were readily provided to Maroons disposed to participating in immoral acts. In June 1786 a decree of the Conseil du Cap indicated this:

. . . condemning one Toussaint, absconder, Negro belonging to the Widow Jupiter to be flogged in nude effigy in all the byways and public squares of Cap . . . a group of slaves and free blacks to be hanged in the marketplace for various thefts, a group of slaves of both sexes to be present on their knees before the gallows at the execution of said blacks, then to be whipped and branded with the letters *GAL* and condemned in perpetuity to the King's chain<sup>27</sup> for having under false passes occupied a room in Little Guinea in the house of one Larose, Free Negro, censures Mr. Baptiste Massé with penalty upon repetition, for having rented rooms and closets in the house of one Larose, N.L., to several slaves and for being suspected of having had knowledge of the mischief committed by these renters.<sup>28</sup>

For the same reasons in the preceding month the Conseil Supérieur of Cap had condemned Joseph Mabiala and Blaise, leaders of a Maroon band, and Pierre, one of the members of the band, to be broken alive, "the body of the latter to be exposed in the place known as La Fossette all the next day, Sunday following the execution."<sup>29</sup>

In Saint-Marc there were Maroons who also resorted to pillaging. One of their leaders, Benoît, was captured and hanged.<sup>30</sup> The phenomenon was not peculiar to Saint-Domingue. Elsewhere, in Jamaica, the outskirts of Kingston were infested with undisciplined types

hidden in and around the town in very considerable number, causing great damage to their masters and a clear detriment to the inhabitants. As there were people infamous enough to be sympathetic to these slaves, Captain Barlet, the city's police inspector, proposed a measure which would remedy the evil resulting from marronage: namely to appoint someone with the responsibility for registering the name and exact description of every runaway slave.<sup>31</sup>

Severe exemplary punishments were meted out but neither the British police force (since 1764 without success in Saint-Domingue and still at the stage of placing advertisements), nor the police of Cap, Port-au-Prince, or Saint-Marc ever succeeded in bringing disorder and brigandage in the suburbs to a halt. It is readily understandable that the climate of anarchy facilitated the harboring of Maroons. Besides, professional contrabanders frequented these areas, always on the lookout for a Maroon to dupe, to lead him by enticing promises to the new chains of brokers and beaters on the lookout for idle arms to offer at a price to colonists and freedmen always in need of work hands, and ready to close their eyes to the identity of the slave to be hired for day's and piecework.

From the suburbs, Maroons ventured out to the ports. It required but a bit of luck for them to accumulate some minute capital in coin or in kind sufficient for obtaining a small craft, the dreamed of means for changing parishes by debarking on new shores where no one would suspect the fraudulent liberty of the new arrival. It was especially the skilled workers who took this chance. They had a trade, sometimes two, making it possible for them to earn a living. Others deserted the suburbs to head for other parishes over little-traveled roads in like hope of disappearing without a trace. Here and there, some had friends, acquaintances, relatives, shipmates, or countrymen.

Leaving Port-au-Prince they reached Croix des Bouquets, disappearing in Plaine du Cul-de-Sac. Those from Saint-Marc fell in with each other again around Mirebalais, Gonaïves, or Boucassin. Those from the Cap area moved out to Limonade, to Quartier Marin in Caracol or Fort-Dauphin. Those from Nippes sought refuge in the cantons of Grand Anse and vice versa. Thus the trails were quite garbled. It is regrettable that the advertisements did not follow the itineraries more closely. Of the recaptured Maroon we more often know the place where he is taken than his point of departure.

However, this latter information is sometimes also provided. It is from the cantons which were frequent passages for Maroons in the North, in Artibonite, the West, the South, Northwest and Southwest. The borders of Etang Saumâtre on the way out of Cul-de-Sac, Trou, Ouanaminthe, Verrettes, Mirebalais—the frontier route; Dondon, Limbé, Marmelade, which border the nearby mountains. Port-Margot, Petite Anse, Baie de Jacquesy, Acul-Samedi, Jean Rabel, Arcahaye, Léogâne Heights, practically all Grand Anse, Morne de l'Hôpital and Coupe Heights in the Port-au-Prince region complete the list of known hiding places where Maroons were retaken, of the



places of refuge they most frequently adopted to cover their tracks and to attempt a new life.

Generally the mass of fugitives could be divided into three groups: those who loitered around the big cities, notably Cap; those who moved step by step to reach distant cantons; and those en route to the Spanish area. Other groups in the end joined up with organized bands and—when they were accepted—shared the life of the Maroons established in the mountain heights and the vast stretches of woods, where, according to their needs and the available manpower, they cleared new ground for subsistence gardens around which to organize a community of free blacks subordinate to a leader and subject to rules.

These Maroons needed, in addition to gardens, replenishments in arms, farm tools, clothes for protection against the cold nights, and other utility items that had to be sought outside. At times the expected harvests suffered bad weather and delay. The group then organized raids against the nearest plantation. Always mentioned are the hills of Plymouth in the South, the vast uninhabited stretches around Baradères, which facilitated "perpetual marronage of various blacks," also Manuel, still celebrated for having sheltered a hundred-year rebellion forming, between the two parts of the island, a zone practically abandoned to Maroons, as if it were in fact an independent state. This zone comprised a mountain chain extending from Fond du Diable to Sud de Mirebalais, to the eastern limits of Jacmel near Morne de Selle, reaching into Spanish territory. Its sustenance was derived from bartering with the communities of Neybe and Beate, and it extended as far as the Bahoruco mountains where inaccessible gorges harbored other Maroon communities.

If Plymouth and Maniel were the inviolate refuge of the best-supplied Maroons, these mountains were far from having been the only organized centers. During his eighteen years as a Maroon Macandal was not familiar with Plymouth or Maniel. Smaller groups of Maroons existed in woodlands bands "in these entrenched camps sealed off by palisades and surrounded by ditches twelve to fifteen feet deep, eight to ten wide, armed at the bottom with sharp pointed stakes."<sup>32</sup> Thus many Maroons lived in hiding with the same mode of organized life in all parts of the colony. The proof of this is that descriptions of the depredations committed by Maroons emanated from all sectors: cattle thefts, enticement of blacks into marronage, kidnapping of women to relieve the loneliness of the mountains and to provide a range of domestic services beginning with the preparation of meals ensured by the sacking of plantation warehouses and reserves.

The line of these raids is underscored in the sales of mountain coffee plantations in which it was specified that the plantation "is safe from maroon raids, well protected in spite of the remoteness." It is also known that freedmen scattered throughout the heights in the North and in the South were often victims of these Maroon incursions, of actual pillaging (sometimes

armed bands), for there were cases of assassination of mulattoes or free blacks who had dared to oppose these hungry, aggressive Maroons. Without doubt, it was to these raids that Lucien Peytraud referred when he stated that marronage was "an open sore."

Some historians, among them Father Cabon, assure us that for their part Saint-Domingue was less victimized by marronage and its attendant damage than Jamaica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Curaçao or the other English, Dutch or French possessions in the Windward and Leeward Islands.

If in Saint-Domingue marronage did not assume a permanently alarming, often aggressive character, if instead it was limited to timid isolated demonstrations, bursts of ill temper and the whims of libertine, dissolute, and undisciplined lazy slaves, what explanation could there be for the repressive measures which had constantly to be employed for repressing this infraction?

For example: the constant reinforcement of organizations of repression which Saint-Domingue, certainly larger and richer than other colonies, alone maintained permanently, the relentless struggle that these special troops had to wage against Maroons, sometimes requiring help from volunteers, at other times from freedmen, even slaves. Specifically for the security of the colonists, legislation was constantly reinforced with innumerable prohibitions against gatherings of blacks, dances, moving about without passes, free access to neighboring plantations, bearing arms, going out at night, the use of boats, talking to slaves without the master's permission; night searches, and other measures.

There was a continuing multiplication of exemplary punishments inflicted on slaves: hanging, being broken alive on the wheel, having their ears cut off or hamstrings cut, being burned alive and having their ashes scattered to the winds. . . .

With the exception of the special circumstances of the Maroon community led by Maniel it is difficult to find any value in these kinds of measures if indeed marronage presented no real danger to the colony. For over a decade Maniel increased his excursions, devastating Saltrou and the surrounding areas until at times they were reduced to a mere "five or six inhabitants." After several fruitless military actions the French were forced to parley for a treaty of peace.

Certainly it is not with short-lived marronage, marronage of the truancy-school concept, that the advertisements in every case are concerned. That the letters of plantation managers make only passing mention of marronage is easily understood; the culpable were astutely silent, little inclined themselves to announce the result of privations and abuses of the slave. That the administration likewise made little mention of it or did so cryptically, although this was not always the case, surely indicates a certain reluctance to advertise its incapacity to maintain order. And did freedmen proprietors in the remote areas, regular victims of Maroon raids, actually ever express their



alarm? What authority would have echoed their desperate complaints or even lent an ear to their lamentations?

Finally, mention must be made of the refuge fugitive slaves sought abroad. Earlier we mentioned flights by sea. Much more numerous were the Maroons who headed for the "Spanish" road.

What were the advantages of asylum in a foreign land which made "the Spaniard" so desirable as a privileged refuge for Maroons? First of all there was the proximity of a country without a border, except on maps, separating it from the French sector, and the natural extension of the same mountains, the same rivers under the same sky. Also, there was the regular refusal during certain eras to extradite fugitive slaves, a practice which eventuated in providing protection for the slave guilty of a crime punishable by death; in addition the treatment given the slaves who were "generally fed the same fare as their masters was rather more humane."<sup>33</sup> There was the hope of a better life less constrained to harsh labor, labor confined mostly to stockraising when it was not a matter of tolerated freedom from the time of arrival; the possibility of becoming a keeper of herds abandoned in the wide pastures and of enjoying relative freedom with long siestas; the ability to come and go without surveillance and the easy, indolent life of the Spaniard; the possibilities for early freedom in a society in which the greatest interpenetration of classes was practiced without too many restrictions or racial complexes.

In brief, the Spanish part of Saint-Domingue was, in the eyes of the slave, the nearest image of the liberty to which he aspired. It should also be understood that blacks were constantly drawn to the east by the propaganda and enticing promises of the Spanish colonists and authorities. It remains, however, to be shown how new slaves scarcely debarked, not yet admitted to the ranks of the "vertically baptized," not yet branded, could so easily in their flight have found their way to the Spaniard. These escapes imply complicity rather than any effectiveness of the Spanish propaganda, which of course could not yet have meaning for the newly debarked slave incapable of expressing himself, ignorant of his own [colonial] name, not knowing that of his master or plantation. The route to the frontier required several stages, guides, and helping hands each time the new slave set out, whether from Plaine du Nord, or Cul-de-Sac, or Artibonite. Debbasch<sup>34</sup> proposed an astounding explanation for these flights by newly arrived blacks: "These new blacks totally ignorant or almost so who as though by chance reach the Spanish port of Saint-Domingue believed all the while they were walking back to Africa."

After leaving the African coast the slaves had spent forty days crossing the sea, forty days, often more, of anguish and torture, both mental and physical. How, even if "totally ignorant or almost so," could they have erased from memory the image of that frightful nightmare, the recent memory of the slave ship for forty days tossed on the seas, and then believe that by walking straight ahead for two or three days they would again find Africa "as if by chance," without crossing the sea? Whether or not inspired

by Dutertre,<sup>35</sup> the statement is ludicrous. It will, however, not divert a more scrupulous or less whimsical scrutiny of flights by new blacks and the network of complicity they suggest.

The majority of new blacks arrested and brought back from the Spanish sector as well as creoles or creolized Africans were jailed in Cap or Fort Dauphin.<sup>36</sup> That at least was the custom at the close of the colonial period when, within the framework of the intervening peace between Spain and France, sham extraditions of captured fugitives were effected from time to time in an attempt to soften the justified complaints of French authorities. The Spaniards returned a few slaves, but, according to contemporary witnesses, they held the great majority. The occasional deliveries tended to serve as appeasement and to camouflage by such show of goodwill the regular practice of facilitating the desertion of slaves from the French area, thus securing at low cost a complement of manpower. These lots of captured fugitives to be extradited appear in practice to have been gathered together in the North to be taken to the nearest jails, the ones at Fort-Dauphin and in Cap. Thus we will note Maroons from Cul-de-Sac, Gonaïves, Fond Baptiste and even Ile à Vache fleeing to the Spaniards:

—Martin, age twenty to twenty-two, a Congo belonging to Mr. de Boynes in Port-au-Prince, brought back from the Spaniard and now in the Fort-Dauphin jail.

—Saint-Jean, a Congo, left Saint-Marc, was picked up and brought back from the Spanish area to be taken to the jail in Cap.

Thus either at Cap or Fort-Dauphin we find:

—The Congo, François, fugitive from Gonaïves, Jean-François, a Misérable, runaway from Port-au-Prince.

—Jean Baptiste, creole runaway from Ile à Vache.

—Jean-Pierre, a blind creole, accompanied by Angélique, both fugitives from Grande Colline.

—A Congo, Pierre, age thirty, fugitive from Saint-Marc.

—A griffone, Jeannette, age twenty-eight, a runaway from Jacquezy; Joseph, a creole from Cap.

—Reine, an Arada woman of twenty-six, runaway from Cul-de-Sac. The creole Joseph, fugitive from Fond Baptiste.

New Africans brought back from the Spanish area ended up in the same jails. Their point of departure as runaways was rarely stated. The great majority of these new arrivals having just debarked or being in the process of creolization, they do not know, we repeat, their new names, their destination, the language of the country, or their master's names. Sometimes they



wore only the ship's brand, rarely a brand that indicated their owner or the place of their flight:

- A new black, no brand, age about twenty-six, does not know his name and his master's, picked up and brought back from the Spaniard.
- Three new blacks about twenty-five, branded "Le Couturier."
- Saint-Marc, brought back from the Spaniard.
- Four new blacks, Congos, ages twenty to twenty-four, can't give their names nor their master's, picked up and returned from the Spaniard.
- Three Congos, branded P.B. (ship's brand), don't know their names or their master's, all three brought back from the Spaniard.
- Marie-Louise and Jacques, new Congos, no brand, picked up in the Spanish sector.
- A Fandy from the Congo, unable to tell his name, not branded, brought back from the Spaniards.

Those who set out toward the Spaniards were generally young, including perhaps many new arrivals, although there were a greater number of young creoles among those extradited.<sup>37</sup> Without doubt it was less compromising for the Spaniards to hold on to new Africans in particular, since they were more difficult to look for and identify. In any event there was nothing to negate the assertion that it was common practice for new blacks in large numbers to find shelter among the Spaniards. No one would be satisfied with Debbasch's explanation. These flights and the search for asylum by scarcely arrived Africans knowing neither their master's nor their own names, ignorant of the language and the geography of the country, could not have been undertaken without active assistance from the slave world, especially from the Maroons.

We will have to make up our minds to acknowledge this one logical hypothesis supported by so many examples. Besides, in the year-by-year analyses of descriptions, the facts confirm this observation, especially when one considers the large numbers of bossales retrieved from the Spaniards and the announcements of escapes by new Africans "in boats," not to mention all of the advertisements clearly specifying that these blacks "were assisted by other blacks."

Whether about specific problems the new arrivals could never alone resolve, or about the routes they were incapable of negotiating on their own, the indications, when indeed they were not simply and clearly denunciations of complicity, are ample, indisputable proof.

## Which Slaves Took Flight<sup>1</sup>

IN DISCUSSING SLAVES it is generally advisable to distinguish four groupings:

*Creoles*, or those born in Saint-Domingue. Slaves from Africa called *bossales* when newly arrived and more generally, *dandas*, an expression apparently not current toward the end of the seventeenth century. New blacks were those not yet a year in Saint-Domingue and who having achieved an understanding of Creole and French after a year had lost their initial status as *bossales*<sup>38</sup> and were lumped with born creoles.

It is the same with slaves from the nearby Antilles, Jamaica, Martinique, Curaçao, whether born in these islands or creolized there. They were no longer *bossales* nor even "new blacks," having already acquired the mark of the islands, more or less identical with Saint-Domingue. One could not depend on a brand for distinguishing whether a slave was newly arrived from Africa or born in the colony. As we have previously noted, branding was practiced indiscriminately on creole Africans, and on those brought in on slave ships. It should be noted however that many new Africans who became Maroons had not been branded, or carried only a ship's brand, or wore only the marks of their country of origin.<sup>39</sup>

The clothing worn by captured Maroons was a clue to the condition of the individual fugitive, that is, whether he was a field worker, house servant, or skilled worker, and further gave some idea of whether his owner was poor white or a wealthy proprietor.

Another clue to differentiating Maroons was the language or languages they spoke. This information was strewn at random throughout the descriptions. Africans "speaking good French," "does not speak French," "from France, speaks the language fluently," or even "speaks Gascon. . . ."<sup>40</sup> "Blacks fluent in two languages," "unable to tell," "does not know his name or that of his master."<sup>41</sup> . . . Africans "speaking Spanish well," "speaking English, Dutch, Spanish and scarcely any Creole." . . . Slaves "speaking only their own tongue," "speaking Spanish and Curaçaoan."

From this diversity of specifics it is possible to distinguish:

The creole African, who spoke Creole and French well or fluently or who "speaks slowly and very distinctly for a negro which leads him to claim he is free"; the *bossale* who spoke only his native tongue; the new black



who already spoke some French<sup>42</sup> and was well on the way to assimilating French and Creole, to become creolized, assimilated to the creoles; and, finally, from neighboring countries, the creolized who, by virtue of successive sales and shifts in locale, had learned Spanish, English, and Dutch and, sometimes, in addition to these, "Curaçaoian," which is the Creole of the Dutch Antilles, called *Papamiento*. It goes without saying that creoles or the creolized from Martinique and other French possessions, because of their knowledge of Creole, immediately found themselves placed in the ranks of the creoles.

We have found no indications of mulatto Indians speaking Marcorix, Lucayo, or any other extant language of the Indian period. This is additional proof that the last survivors were already mixed and by way of disappearing from the entire Carib region.

As for African languages, it is difficult to understand how they could have been so submerged by Creole as to leave only relatively minute traces in the vocabulary, principally in Voodoo rites and songs. Without doubt, the phenomenon is due to the fact that the bossale was ridiculed for his crude Creole (*parler langage*).<sup>43</sup>

However, and it is here that the difficulty arises, the slaves continued to converse among themselves in their native languages. When Africans of the same nation came together, they freely resorted to their language of origin for their traditional palaver. What is more, drivers, often creole blacks in contact with slaves of different languages, became familiar with their language and on occasion even served as interpreters, evidence of the continued use of these languages. According to Saint-Rémy, Toussaint-Louverture understood Arada, and as noted by Guy Bonnet,<sup>44</sup> the mulatto Bélisaire, after long contact with work gangs of diverse origins in Plaine du Cul-de-Sac, learned to speak practically every African language represented in Saint-Domingue.

The places where fugitives were captured also provide clues. In general, it was the creoles who were captured in the towns. Laborers headed for the mountains and plunged into still-forested areas. The skilled workers changed hiding places from city to city, parish to parish. There were of course exceptions to the rule, which nevertheless do not negate these generalizations. In fact, and fortunately so, in order to avoid any possible mistake, the descriptions themselves most often indicated whether the fugitives were creoles or new arrivals. It is only when this detail was not provided that we can profitably resort to the indicated clues in order to distinguish among creoles, new blacks, and bossales. These observations are indispensable for any detailed analysis and statistics deriving from a summary of lists of slaves declared Maroons or jail inmates, or for sale as strays.

These lists end with designations of masters. If it is a plantation owner or a colonist practicing a trade or profession it is probable that the hunted

fugitive is more likely an unskilled black than a house slave, or a semiskilled domestic than an unskilled black.

Previous chapters devoted to the slave have without doubt sufficiently indicated that marronage was practiced by all kinds of Africans: young and old, male and female, house slaves and field slaves, skilled as well as factory workers; creoles, bossales or new blacks and the creolized; by Congos, Aradas, Mozambiques, blacks of every origin, mulattoes, griffes, Indians, quadroons, the well nourished and the hungry, the weak as well as the strong, those with cruel masters, those with good ones . . . with no exceptions. Surely new Africans, in greater numbers, were more often than creoles denounced in descriptions. Without doubt, Congos dominated the lists which, it should be remembered, embrace the end of the colonial period.

Slave ship arrivals and subsequent slave sales were specified by numbered cargoes only for a few years at the close of the colonial period. There remained the fugitive-slave advertisements or advertisements of recaptured slaves, which nevertheless do not enlighten us about the number of origins of slaves never caught. To nurse any hope of establishing complete statistics on runaways is to be unrealistic. Therefore while deploring the gap in existing documentation we will hold on to the information provided by the descriptions, namely that new blacks more than creoles were inclined to marronage.

As for the Congos, it is they who would prove to be the most given to marronage, whether as new arrivals or already creolized Congos long in service in the colony. This negates their unjustified traditional reputation as traitors and submissive slaves. We know the origin of this odious label. Cagnet and Jacques Tellier, at the head of a group of Plaine du Cap Congos hostile to Dessalines, Christophe and other leaders of the native army deserted the ranks, and, on the eve of Independence, joined forces with Rochambeau. With the memory of this treason still alive, it became current practice to associate with treason the name Congo, now become a synonym for traitor.

According to Maroon descriptions, the Congos comprised the most important Maroon groups. Certainly a half. After them, the Mozambiques of the same Bantu group, the Ibos and Aradas, creole Africans; then the Nagos, Bambaras, Mondongos, and others. The very evolution of the slave trade, by multiplying cargos from such or such origin in a specific period, strongly influences the graph of flights by "nations."

The main question still lies unanswered. How establish the margin between the number of Maroons captured and those never captured? There are no data to provide the answer, and it is not possible in any sure way to determine, from the number of slaves captured, how many had taken flight. It is known that some runaways were captured and taken to jail. According to Peytraud, these were few in number. It is also quite well known that, tired of wandering about the woods, starved and deprived of assistance, some



Maroons of their own accord returned, upon invitation of the master. On the other hand, only a small number of colonists and landowners publicized in the press the flight of their slaves.

Under such conditions, how would we establish this difference between captured Maroons and total Maroons in flight, publicized or not? Perhaps we would come close to the facts by adopting a mean of 25 percent as reasonable for captured Maroons, that is, one-quarter taken, three-quarters lost. Such a hypothesis—clearly this is but a hypothesis—seems plausible when we consider the importance, clear or poorly concealed, of marronage, “its horrible disorders,” “its festering wound” on the one hand, and, on the other the fact, we repeat, that for diverse and well-known reasons only a small number of colonists gave public notice of runaways.

This very reasonable margin which to us seems close to the facts would indicate from one period to another the alarming character of the flights. Gabriel Debien and the author in collaboration analyzed five hundred descriptions of Maroons, both captured and at large, just in the region of Cap and its suburbs over a ten-month period.<sup>45</sup> The figure of five hundred acknowledged Maroons permits supposition of some fifteen hundred to two thousand fugitive slaves for the same period. This is the actual figure that must be reconciled from slave inventories in that part of the North and from arrival figures, in order to derive some idea of the alarming nature of slave flights.

According to “L’Etat général des cultures et des manufactures de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue” for the parish in question and the year 1791, relating specifically to the descriptions examined, the number of blacks in service in the sugar mills, on coffee plantations, cotton mills, indigo farms, tanneries, cocoa fields, lime kilns, brickyards and pottery is as follows:

|                                    |         |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Cap and its dependencies           | 21,613  |
| Petite Anse and Plaine du Nord     | 11,122  |
| Acul, Limonade, and Sainte-Suzanne | 19,876  |
| Quartier-Morin and Grande-Rivière  | 18,554  |
| Dondon and Marmelade               | 17,370  |
| Limbé and Port-Margot              | 15,978  |
| Plaisance and Borgne               | 15,018  |
| Total <sup>46</sup>                | 119,531 |

The above total is for a population of 455,000 slaves distributed throughout the colony. To the 119,531 slaves in the North, including the 21,613, 10,573 were delivered there with a breakdown as will follow. For comparison we will set the actual figure for slave arrivals in Cap against slave figures for Cap and its dependencies. We do not have the figures for 1791, but we know that for the entire colony importation was 30,835 slaves in 1787 and 29,506 in 1788. In that same year of 1788, for the single port of Cap, there were thirty-seven slave ships unloading:

|              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| Men          | 5,913  |
| Women        | 2,394  |
| Little boys  | 1,514  |
| Little girls | 752    |
| Total        | 10,573 |

In any case, whether by highlighting the figures for total slave population or by taking into account announcements of slave-ship arrivals, we become aware that fifteen hundred or two thousand runaways in ten months represents a considerable percentage.

As against 10,573 Africans arriving in Cap, even supposing half of them were kept in this city, a slave port and distribution center, the figure of two thousand Maroons is a very large one. The rate of growth in the cadres would be severely handicapped by marronage, for the creole birth rate, already reduced by abortions, could not provide compensations. Financial loss would come close to four million livres, if we keep in mind that the average price of a slave at that point in colonial history was 2,099 livres,<sup>47</sup> not to mention the booty carried off by Maroons in linen, farm tools, utensils and food, and, in addition, the costs of roundups, flight announcements, or other formalities, and the loss of livestock, sometimes horses, mules. . . .

#### NOTES, pp. 247-283

1. *S.A.A.*, 6 May 1786.
2. This word is colonial parlance clearly used to refer to short-lived flights, which we identify with simple snags in the discipline of the work gangs.
3. On the matter "of the departure of managers for certain isolated plantations or farms which then often serve as dens for Slaves in marronage," the Provincial Assembly of the North in its session 11 December 1789 made it a requirement "to have a White or a Freedman to supervise the Slaves on each plantation or subsistence plot more than one hour distant from the main plantation."
4. "We suggest that someone who wanted to appropriate to himself these slaves, a group of four bakers, by a flattering hope enticed them into running away and is now keeping them hidden in town." *S.A.A.*, 12 January 1785. "We suspect he is plying his trade on some plantation." *S.A.A.*, 7 August 1775.
5. *A.A.*, 2 August 1775.
6. Antoine ran away 8 November 1782 "after having been insolent and mistreating a white man on Mr. Charrier's plantation in Haut du Cap." *S.A.A.*, February 1782.
7. De Pradt, *Des Colonies*, I, 259.
8. It was especially easy for peddlers to take flight by virtue of their incessant moving about. In the month of May 1784 there was offered for sale a black woman peddler who, it was said, "will not be back from her circuit until the end of June."
9. *S.A.A.*, 26 March 1783.
10. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, Wednesday, 20 April 1791.
11. The typical example of marronage is supplied by advertisements of this type: "Congo slave unbranded, age twenty-eight, five feet three inches, bought aboard the ship *La Médié* May 23 last, taken to Limbé on the twenty-fourth, ran away eight days ago"



- (*Avis Divers*, 3 April 1765). Or "Seven new Congo slaves, newly branded, runaways from Plantation Dufourq at Fonds des Nègres."
12. *S.A.A.*, 20 November 1784.
  13. Fleeing Spanish domination Chief Hatuey and some Indians reached Cuba in pirogues.
  14. *S.A.A.*, 23 October 1784.
  15. *A.A.*, 17 November 1784.
  16. Similar examples may be found in runaway slave advertisements for other years. For example, on 17 May 1769, "Seventeen slaves, the majority creoles, ran away from Mme. Beaupoel's plantation in Gonaïves." Or in 1773, at Plantation Millot in Petite-Anse, twenty slaves, men, women, children and an old man of seventy-eight years escape together on the same night."
  17. Observation by Mr. Debien.
  18. *Avis divers* and *Petites Affiches Américaines*, 23 October 1765. Type of special pass: "Valid for a slave named Jean who will be peddling in the areas of Saint-Marc, Cap and Fort-Dauphin; good for one month, at Port-au-Prince, January 12, 1767. I say the twelfth of January 1767 and said black supplied with a one-eared mule. Signed Mesplès, senior." *Affiches Américaines*, 16 February 1767.
  19. Candale: "shorts without bottoms," from Labat, II, 134.
  20. Dutertre.
  21. Wild pig was prize game. It provided the grease necessary for cooking. This lard was called *manteca* by the Spaniards and became *mantegue* in Creole. Mantègre Hill owes its name to the abundance of these wild pigs. It was a hiding place for runaway slaves. The South had the most game. To be found in abundance there were wood pigeons, water fowl, ducks, guinea fowl, wild pigs. In addition, at Dalmarie, Roseaux, and especially throughout Grande-Anse, crabs swarmed in the ravines (Moreau 111, 1404; I, 207).
  22. Vaissière, *op. cit.*, 233.
  23. Dutertre 11, 536.
  24. Labat, I, 43.
  25. Cited by Father Gisler, p. 199.
  26. Vaissière, p. 234.
  27. Slaves attached to the King's Chain were put to work on public projects. On Gonaïve Island there was a prison, agricultural, and crafts complex, where those condemned under common law were kept. Prisoners in the jails sometimes worked as servants to the military and to high functionaries. Each prison had "a criminal room where examinations were carried on by the chief judge who handled the transferring of prisoners. . . . It was there that under the horrors of torture . . . the prisoner bought surcease from excruciating pain sometimes with a vow, too often with a lie thereby condemning himself or others to execution" (Saint-Méry, I, 392).
  28. *S.A.A.*, 14 June 1786.
  29. *S.A.A.*, 6 May 1786.
  30. *S.A.A.*, 1789.
  31. *S.A.A.*, 1 January 1785.
  32. *Mémoire sur les nègres marrons*, cited by Vaissière, 234-235.
  33. Very few "Spanish" slaves fled to the French sector. However we note the names of several masters with their locales: Don Juan from S. Yague in 1764, Dasilva, Signor Ticho, etc. It should be noted in passing that, before the American War of 1764 up through 1780, Saint-Domingue journals often used the phrase *chez l'espagnol* and not *à l'Espagnol*.
  34. *Op. cit.*, I, 49.
  35. Speaking of new slaves, Father Dutertre declares that "the severity of the work

which was foreign to them in their native land discouraged them and led them to run away to the woods, hoping thus to find a way back to their countries. . . ." (11, 535).

36. In 1765 Maroons held in custody at Fort-Dauphin were transferred to Cap "to be sent to the chain gang."
37. We note, curiously enough, the extradition of a number of black creoles said to be Spanish speaking. Were they a bad lot, or was there among the Spaniards an uneasiness about having in their midst blacks who with their knowledge of the language might lead other fugitives astray? The general opinion still holds that the Spanish-speaking refugee slave had in fact greater opportunity for employment or liberation in the eastern sector.
38. "They are angered and consider it an insult to be treated like *bossales*, that is, new arrivals, when they have already been there a year." (Malenfant, *op. cit.*, p. 208.) "Isidore a Congo speaks Creole well although in the country only eighteen months" (*A.A.*, 11 September 1771).
39. Their flights must have occurred so soon after their arrival that the masters had not had time to brand them.
40. The item "speaks French and Gascon" is noted in more than ten descriptions.
41. There are a few cases of Maroons pretending ignorance of Creole or French. "In Jérémie the maroon Georges a Congo although actually creolized tries to pass for a bossale." Sometimes a Maroon proved very cunning and covered his tracks. Léogâne, 28 March 1791, letter to the editor: "Sir, the article on maroons and unclaimed runaway slaves published in the colony's papers is most useful to the residents but the information is often useless due to carelessness of prison keepers in giving exact descriptions of blacks. . . . Upon entering jail slaves often hide their names and those of their masters. If one who says he is Jeân-Baptiste is otherwise named, if Mr. Tellier is not his master, then there remains only information about the nature and defect of a brand which is no information at all." (*Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, Mercredi, 30 March 1791.)
42. A new black, Mascarie, a Congo who when called replies "my master."
43. Perhaps the displacement of African languages was also a result of the increase of creoles in the composition of work gangs and their numerical superiority following the decline then the suppression of the regular trade during the last ten years of colonization.
44. Advertisements sometimes described slaves as "speaking several of the Guinea languages."
45. *Journal Général de Saint-Domingue*, 16 October 1790 to 16 August 1791.
46. See Bryan Edwards, *An Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of St. Domingo*, London 1797, p. 187.
47. *Almanach Général de Saint-Domingue*, Mozard, 1. According to Bryan Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 200, the average appraised value per slave was 2500 livres in 1791. The same author gives the figure 2099 pounds, 2 shillings for the year 1788. (*op. cit.*, p. 208.)



## VII

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### A CHRONOLOGY OF MARRONAGE

THE IMPORTANCE of marronage is best demonstrated in a chronological account. Therefore the last part of this work will be dedicated to highlighting, in this fashion, the gravity of these desertions. In spite of the armed revolts, the successive rebellions and the constant increase in the number of Maroons, the colonists, the administration, and the chroniclers of the period, regularly manifest in their correspondence<sup>1</sup> a tendency to hide the extent of the losses. Here and there, however, certain suggestive statements filter through. Scant attention is given the resurgences of marronage, as if this were not an important concern or as if at long last people had become accustomed to permanent unrest as an integral part of the trials, misery, and danger of colonial life.

There is evident proof that the evil continued to grow. In fact, the proscriptions and prohibitions aimed at blocking the road to marronage, the organization and permanent maintenance of militias for the pursuit of the fugitives, and the extraordinary abundance, in every region of the country, of retreats either bearing the names of Maroon leaders or indicating the Maroon presence are increased: Piton des Ténèbres, Mulâtre-domptés, Crête-à-Congo, Pic des Platons, Cavernes de Cavaillon, de Trou, de Marmelade and others. There was also the century-long resistance of Bahoruco and the necessity for negotiating with the rebels, as one powerful people with another, a treaty of peace; the continuous pursuit of extradition of fugitives from the Spanish sector; the accounts of the raids and devastation committed by the Maroons; the imposing lists of Maroons revealed by the colonists themselves; and, finally, the great armed revolts which surpassed in amplitude all the sporadic movements noted in the neighboring Antilles. . . .

No matter how heavy this toll, there was, nevertheless, an abiding reluctance to admit, even to recognize, the importance of marronage. Moreau de Saint-Méry's compilation of the laws and constitutions of Saint-Domingue is filled to the overflow with judgments against slaves who in the name of liberty had become Maroons or rebels. The accusations were cloaked under the rubric "civil crimes," that is, crimes in common law.<sup>2</sup> Clearly this betrayed a kind of chauvinism that would never permit the thought that the organizational genius of the French administration could ever be found wanting. It was freely admitted that rebellions occurred elsewhere, but certainly not in the French colonies. There was agreement in certifying and describing publicly the fact that marronage could rage in the neighboring islands under English, or Dutch, or Danish domination, but be spared the French colonials, *nés malins*, and especially the "lords of Saint-Domingue." This persistent complex paralleled by an anglophobia rooted in colonial mentality and coiled in the subconscious, this ferment of the traditional hatred of perfidious Albion, the hereditary enemy—did they continue as characteristics of certain French historians? None of them devoted more attention to the evolution of marronage than Father Cabon. His true thoughts on this subject were equivocated by avowals of the importance of marronage



coupled with reservations and often—as if this were his main objective—unfavorable comparisons with what was going on elsewhere. In fact, it is Father Cabon who, over many long pages, best demonstrated the increase in slave flights, the scope and the multiplication of desertions and revolts. Frequently he wrote in this vein:

Thus we see that in Saint-Domingue marronage far from diminishing constantly caused the Administration<sup>3</sup> the greatest trouble [and] . . . as for the maroons, they never cease to be a danger.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, it was also Father Cabon who would attempt to show that the English and the Dutch Antilles were always in a greater state of unrest than the possessions of the French Crown, and who would denounce “the harshness of the English laws.” As if the French colonists treated their slaves any better and were less barbarous than the rest!

Here again are some very suggestive lines from Father Cabon:

In that time (around 1734, the year in which Saint-Domingue experienced the ravages of the Maroon chieftain Polydor) there was a marked resurgence of marronage in the Antilles. . . . In neither Martinique nor Guadeloupe were there armed uprisings; poisoning . . . and arson were the weapons. But Surinam and Jamaica suffered particularly at the hands of the maroons. It is clear that Saint-Domingue did not experience so much trouble, although the hills and the proximity of the Spaniards made it easy for the maroons to run off, to regroup and to enjoy impunity after their misdeeds. . . . We should here note that the English colonies suffered a great deal from slave revolts. It is safe to conclude that if there has been no general uprising in Saint-Domingue, it is because the motivating cause has been lacking; common opinion in the French colonies associates this cause with the harshness of the English laws.

Generally speaking, would it be, however bold the statement, a mistake to detect at times in historians of the French colonization traces of this same complex of “common opinion in the French colonies,” all the while of course guarding against extending this fault to the work of so honest a thinker as Père Cabon? For our part, we cannot see any other explanation for these reservations about the importance of marronage, the silence with which they wished to surround it, and the secret purpose of a position so strange and so far from the truth.

The facts are there, clear and indisputable. They could not nevertheless remain ignored by the very people who daily were affected by them and who furthermore over a period of more than two centuries complained about the scarcity of manpower due to “mortalities and desertions.” Moreover, it is this ostrichlike behavior which will be observable—the very height of irony—even while in 1791 the northern provinces were being ravaged by the general

slave revolt during which, in the smoking ruins, the cadavers of white colonials numbered in the thousands. This is not to mention the unprecedented loss of two hundred sugar mills as well as twelve hundred coffee plantations destroyed at the same time and the more than fifteen thousand slaves who deserted forever the work gangs in the North after calm had been restored. In the face of this disaster, the General Assembly convened on the morning of 15 September and expressed the certainty that this could not have been an uprising of the blacks, that most of these had been carried off and forced to follow a number of brigands and were now of a mind to return to their labors. The minutes read:

Whereas, among the number of negroes who appeared to be in open revolt there may have been many who were led to follow the brigands and who moved with them through fear,

Whereas, those negroes whom force and fear aligned with the brigands now without doubt are but awaiting a favorable opportunity to escape from them so as to return to their work, and

Whereas, from the moment when our armed forces deploy to combat and exterminate the insurgents, these same negroes will hasten to lay down arms and to seek pardon. . . .<sup>4</sup>

Here, in much the same menacing, almost triumphal tone, is Blanchelande's proclamation aimed at the rebels:

In this war which you force upon me, nothing is more cruel than the necessity to destroy you in great number or to deprive you of the means of sustenance. [The subsistence gardens were then being destroyed.] I am willing to pardon you the ills you have visited upon this Province: keep your word, give yourselves up, lay down your arms, return to your plantations, I promise you a general amnesty; my word as a soldier is inviolable. Here are my terms: work gang by work gang you will proceed to an area five hundred steps from the camps at Petite-Anse and Haut-du-Cap there to turn in your arms, and each work gang after having thus laid down every type of weapon will withdraw to the plantation to which it belongs, unless for its safety and preservation it should be considered more appropriate to give it, temporarily, some other asylum, for as you know there are a number of plantations where you will find no housing to shelter you.<sup>5</sup>

This is by no means a matter of naiveté. It is, rather, a voluntary dissimulation of a situation, the dramatic character of which collided violently with colonial prejudices. The authorities will prefer to deny the evidence and to attempt to give credence to the hope that the rebels would return to the fold, to those very masters of whom they had just strangled a thousand or more. They will prefer to imagine cohorts of repentant slaves, prodigal sons coming to offer their necks to the pillory of slavery in order to help forge new chains.



After all, how unthinkable it was that there might be desertions, and revolts, and Maroons in Saint-Domingue!

Never did the complex in question offer more positive proof of an unconscious pride, and nowhere is it better expressed than in the wording of these "whereases," certainly a strange but constant attitude, one difficult to deny when it is caught as it were *flagrante delicto*.

In truth, as a footnote to this entirely verbal assurance, appeals for help had been sent, as we know, to every quarter; arms and troop reinforcements had been received; and torture, executions, and hunting down of Maroons and rebels had been going on night and day, while the number of rebels multiplied dangerously. In 1791, the Maroons numbered fifteen thousand; the following year there were in the province of the North alone some twenty-five thousand Maroons under arms. What might the total have been in 1793 if we were to base an estimate on the enormous figure of the fourteen thousand slave women who in the parish of Cap alone, according to official reports, took advantage of the amnesty. What followed is well known. It is by way of delayed action in any case that Polvérel, in his proclamation of 31 October 1793, will recognize reality:

Two years of war against the insurgent Africans have convinced the proprietors that henceforth it will be impossible to maintain slavery. Their ateliers were deserted, their homes or plantations burned or devastated, and France drained of men and money; and, while her armies were being annihilated in Saint-Domingue, the armies of the Africans each day were enlarged by newly deserted slaves. . . .

Who, then, in Saint-Domingue could fail to be aware of marronage? Who did not experience losses due to it? Desertions had begun with the arrival of the first African slaves brought to Hispaniola. It is these Africans whose first revolts were described in 1503, who infused the Indian with the spirit of revolt, and who indicated the way of the Maroon to Cacique Henry, for fourteen years (1519-33) in hiding at Bahoruco,<sup>6</sup> accompanied by a number of black Maroons.<sup>7</sup> In the meantime, in 1522, Africans had sacked and pillaged a sugar mill belonging to Don Diego Columbus, son of the admiral, then had extended their ravages to the plantation of Michel de Castro, massacring, killing, and pillaging all along the route to Azua and threatening to sack that town. Tracked down by superior forces, they took the route to the Ocoa Mountains, rejoining other black Maroons who had made their stronghold there.

Since then, revolts occurred without interruption, over some three centuries, and, from Ovando to Barbé de Marbois, the alarm never ceased its clangor, resulting always in bloody repressions. How then deny the importance of marronage, something which in the words of Peytraud, constituted "an ever-present wound" in the corpus of Saint-Domingue, sparing not even the good masters or the reputedly docile work gangs?

With respect to the linkage between marronage and the revolts, two important questions still divide certain historians interested in Saint-Domingue. To wit: did the Maroons feed the great slave revolt? Does history permit advancement of the claim that marronage and the battles for liberty were generally united in one and the same cause well before 1791? And, if so, by what formal evidence? According to the hair-splitting analysts, the colonists, at least in correspondence examined to date, never affirmed this liaison in any expressed manner, and the known witnesses in Saint-Domingue were mute on the subject of a reputed linkage between marronage and the revolts, whether in 1791 or before the general slave uprising.

Hence, it would be almost impossible to demonstrate it, if the silence of the colonists on some or other aspect of colonial life were irrefutable proof that such or such a reaction had not taken place in the slave world.

Such reasoning is at base faulty.

Actually, there are those who, ignoring undeniable facts and events, would generally prefer that the colonists themselves had provided precise and detailed written testimony on the behind-the-scenes operations of the struggle secretly organized against them. This, as if the blacks were under the obligation to offer their masters confidences about the conspiracies under preparation and to denounce on every occasion the clandestine organizations that were laboring under the greatest secrecy, drawing upon such resources as guile and the supreme cleverness of the oppressed and the weakest.

Specifically, as regards the revolt in the North, the fact is that all Saint-Domingue was expecting a general slave uprising. From one month to another, after 1789, the malaise continued to mount. Innumerable letters from the colonists describe this, in anguish. And, up to the very evening before the great night of August 1791, rumors had been abroad, thanks to certain slaves impatient for the opening of hostilities.

The truth is that the secret of decisions made at Bois-Caïman had been so well kept that the colonials, according to Malenfant, "had no inkling of their misfortune until it was signaled by the light of the flames." These considerations seem to show that, insofar as the slave rebellions were concerned, the colonists must have been very little, very poorly, and very tardily informed, or not informed at all.<sup>8</sup> Whatever the case, who would refuse, in spite of everything, to admit that, except for sometimes fragile and debatable traditions, only the colonists and historians who were witnesses of the colonial period can serve as sources of Saint-Domingue history? Besides, it is exclusively through the accounts of colonists and the written testimony of the historians of Saint-Domingue that the certainty is derived that marronage and the struggles for liberty were generally one and the same cause and, of course, that the revolt of the slaves in 1791 was closely linked with marronage.

At the time of the general uprising in the parishes of the North, what are the elements, if not the Maroons, that came into action, that held talks with drivers and certain groups of slaves, and assured liaison between the work



forces to be set in motion? Is proof necessary, written proof such as left us by Saint-Domingue witnesses themselves? From the very beginning were not the leaders of the 1791 revolt seasoned Maroons and skilled leaders of Maroon bands, as were Jean-François, Biassou, Jeannot, Macaya, Sans-Souci? And did not such as Boukman and Toussaint Bréda enter into relations with them, immediately subordinating themselves to their direction? How did the slaves upon deserting the work gangs and freeing themselves of their chains then organize themselves?

As is known, and always by the revelations of contemporary witnesses, Maroons joined with slaves in revolt impelled, by force and by threats, a number of work gangs to revolt and the battles were waged in the same manner as the raids against Maroons. For example, Malenfant, an old colonist whom we can believe to have been well informed, testified to this at length, as did numerous other historians of the colonial epoch.

Furthermore, and the information is particularly conclusive, the slaves in revolt, now become new Maroons, did not remain isolated but moved to swell the existing bands of Congos, Nagos, or other "nations," recreating in Saint-Domingue the African tradition of warrior bands often grouped according to tribal origin.

The very choice of leaders itself serves as a cogent implication of this liaison. There is established proof that at the time of the revolt Jeannot was no longer a domestic slave on the plantation of Mr. Bullet. By description he is a "guide" in the Haut-du-Cap mountains. As for Jean-François, former coachman to Mr. Papillon, and Georges Biassou, erstwhile refiner in Mr. Biassou's sugar mill, they were—to repeat—not only known to the Maroons, but had acquired enough authority among them as to be selected as leaders by Toussaint Bréda and Boukman Dutty, as well as by all the slaves in revolt. The first of these taken as prisoners declared that their "supreme chief was Jean-François, whose principal lieutenants were Biassou and Jeannot."<sup>9</sup>

Jean-François knew how to read and write. Already, according to all appearances, he was in continued contact with the priests Bienvenu and Delahaye, respectively of Marmelade and Dondon, and perhaps with certain Spanish authorities, surely in any case, with Desprès, mulatto gunsmith at Fort-Dauphin whom he made his aide-de-camp. Without doubt it was these kinds of contacts coupled with his activity that made him merit the supreme command, with not the slightest demurrer by Toussaint Bréda or Boukman.

Another proof of this liaison between marronage and the general revolt of the parishes in the North is the importance of the armament the slaves were able to bring to bear against the colonial forces from the time of the earliest battles. Without the collaboration of the Maroons, who alone were then capable of liaisons indispensable to the providing of arms? How could the slaves, just barely emerged from work gangs in revolt, have been able so soon to place in the hands of the brigadier de Rouvrai or Commandant

Touzard not only picks, torches, and machetes, but also guns and cannons, with which their fortified camps were filled and which were acquired "from foreign vessels" or "across the Spanish frontier"? Too often, the tendency is to forget that from the beginning the slaves were solidly provided with arms. Had they not been so, why would the colonists have appealed so quickly and so loudly for urgent help from neighboring countries?

No one can honestly deny that the linkage between marronage and the events of 1791 is a historic fact. At any rate, given the abundance of accounts and other written testimony, the authenticity of this claim is less frequently debated. Instead, certain critics reproach the Haitian school of historians for having from the very first associated marronage with the struggle for liberty. The relevant response—using always the words of the colonists and of the Saint-Domingue historians—presents no real difficulty.

Putting aside for a moment the slaves who practiced marronage with no other idea than the search for personal liberty or for improved well-being, it would appear that throughout the colonial era there were, in marronage, active groups preaching and organizing rebellion against chains and slavery. How often in the history of marronage have we not observed those attempts which had as objectives the general massacre of the whites, mass poisonings, and the burning and sacking of plantations?

It is not we who do the telling. The information derives solely from reports conveyed in letters of the colonists or from written accounts of the very historians of the colonization. It is only through these sources that from the first rebellion at Bahoruco to the general uprising of the slaves, we have seen as though in parade the Maroons of Liberty and their bold, courageous leaders, torch in hand: in 1679, Padrejean "who determined to strangle every white in the Northwest"; in 1691, Janot Marin and Georges Dollot, known as Pierrot, who "harbored the project to massacre all the whites of the Port-de-Paix quarter, including women and nursing babes"; in 1719, the black Michele at Bahoruco; in 1724, One-Leg Colas; in 1730, Plymouth; in 1734, Polydor; in 1747, Pompée, all of whom had the same aspiration for full freedom for all. In 1757, Médor, who declares that the mass poisoning which he organized had for its objective "the gaining of liberty." In 1758, there was Macandal, who "had agents all over the colony and was planning the elimination of all the whites." Around 1775, there were Noël, Télémaque Canga, Isaac, and Pyrrhus Candide in the North, Jacques at Cul-de-Sac. In 1785, Santiago, Philippe, Kébinda at Bahoruco. In 1786, Jérôme, called Poteau, who "preaches Independence" in Marmelade, and organizes meetings of the blacks. In 1787, at Trou, Yaya, and finally—the most glorious of them all—Boukman, who enters history with the decisive revolt of 1791. . . .

The historical account of marronage will reveal an accumulation of these irrefutable evidences of the still-contested link between marronage and the struggle for liberty. Meanwhile, let us consider anew and from a closer



vantage point the spontaneous type of marronage, not the marronage of the organized bands whose defense of their liberty proved a daily concern to the colonists, but, rather, the more habitual type, demonstrated by slaves entering into marronage. The most numerous of these Maroons were unquestionably the new arrivals, those most recently debarked from the slave ships. Such is the information provided both by Father Dutertre for the early days of the colonization and by the descriptions in the Saint-Domingue press at the end of the colonial period.

Who were they who, throughout the long years of colonization, provided these newly arrived Africans with such efficient support? Certainly, it was neither the white colonists nor the enfranchised proprietors who, during the span of three centuries, systematically organized the desertions from their own work gangs. Neither can we believe that it was the creole slaves or the creolized Africans of the plantations—supposing they had had the means—who continuously assumed the risk of saving the new arrivals, instead of saving themselves. What then? What alternative choice remains?

Either the new arrivals, in spite of their ignorance of the language and of the geography of Saint-Domingue, were miraculously able to escape to some secure hiding place, to mislead and evade the hunting parties of the military and, strictly on their own, to find the way to Maroon groups or to asylum in the Spanish sector—certainly no one could pay the slightest attention to a hypothesis that smacks so much of fiction—or else the new Africans, during their flights, received help in significant numbers from the only possible source available, the Maroons.<sup>10</sup>

Our own position rests firmly on this latter premise, whether or not colonial accounts specifically indicate its validity, and whether or not historians interested in Saint-Domingue have paid any attention to it. For therein lies a certainty affixed to historic truth and to the most precise, most evident proof of the permanent link between marronage and the slaves' long struggle to break their chains. What additional proof, and of what kind, is there to add to the history taught and written by the colonists themselves? Not a single line of this testimony could have been invented by the historians of the Haitian school, none of whom had been born when Father Dutertre, Charlevoix, Moreau de Saint-Méry, Descourtilz, or Malenfant were writing the history of Saint-Domingue.

This historical account of marronage will group a number of original texts to which we will add commentary only when absolutely necessary. These are eyewitness accounts by Father Charlevoix, or by Moreau de Saint-Méry, Saint-Domingue chroniclers, or pieces taken from the National Archives in Paris. We will add to them certain abstracts from Pierre de Vaissière, Father Cabon and Father Gisler, as well as the most characteristic information supplied by Thomas Madiou, Beaubrun Ardouin, or Pauléus Sannon of the Haitian school. Finally, we will include certain unedited selections likely to shed better light on the persons of certain Maroon leaders,

drawing upon an analysis made of Maroon lists supplied by the Saint-Domingue press and without doubt representing the latest, the richest, most important documentation on marronage. Thus we will have an overall view of the resistance to slavery, of Maroon leaders and bands, of fugitive customs, strongholds, frequent raids, and of legislation and roadblocks continuously employed and reinforced in order to combat desertions. The view will include the actions of the clergy, poisoning, and the parallel evolution of this resistance movement, all of which make it possible for us to embrace, to better come to grips with the slave's long struggle to free himself of his chains. Thus, we will come to the great armed revolts, the natural result of marronage, without being able to uncover the linkage and the fusion of a movement which was but a continuation, hence a reinforcement, of marronage, without being able to disassociate marronage and rebellion.<sup>11</sup> As if the general revolt could have taken place without the Maroons! As if the battle for independence, like the battle for liberty, could have been possible without the support of Maroon bands for so long tempered in warfare, and accustomed to desertion and to the winds of liberty!

If desertions spread rapidly, gaining progressively in every parish and shaking the colonial regime it was, accept it or not, marronage continuing in a form not unknown to other times.<sup>12</sup> Maroons and rebels together used the same methods of devastating and sacking plantations, burning buildings, making night raids and daytime withdrawals to well-protected, safe hiding places. When, on 15 February 1792, the leaders of the freedmen delivered their historic address before the Civil Commissioners, threatening them with withdrawing into the mountains, and waging from there an incessant warfare, were they not thinking then of Maroon strongholds, of Maroon warfare?

Citizens of color will withdraw to the mountains. In these barbarous climates, the woods and the rocks naturally provide safe ramparts against men's injustice and the lairs of the most ferocious beasts offer the unfortunate victims of persecution more agreeable retreats than the pestiferous surroundings of cities where despotism and humanity reign sovereign.

André Rigaud added:

We will defy the tyrants and the enemies of equality and rather than allow your liberty to be endangered, we will go and live with you [the Africans] in those hills which have always offered shelter to persecuted men. And there we will know how to make ourselves feared.

It is the same language and the same appeal to the tactic of the Maroons that Descourtilz reports having heard from the very mouth of Dessalines haranguing his troops:



Nous va chicaner yo, nous va boulé toute récolte layo, puis nous va cacher lan morne<sup>13</sup> à nous.\*

Linkage and fusion? With what and by whom could these have been accomplished if not with and by marronage? And at what moment in Saint-Domingue did they suddenly stop mentioning marronage, Maroons, rebels, fugitives, and revolts, in order to establish a break in the tradition of resistance to slavery and the indomitable call to liberty? Did in fact the word "Maroon" ever disappear from the colonial vocabulary, and when indeed did they stop talking about marronage?

Polvérel and Sonthonax, as well as Bonaparte in his secret orders to Leclerc at the time of the 1803 expedition, still referred to marronage. The best proof of the survival of this term is supplied by the colonists themselves, those who had sought refuge in the United States after the events in Saint-Domingue. As a matter of fact, we have extended our inquiry to the American journals of that era. As follows:

*Journal des Révolutions de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue*, second part, Philadelphia, October 1793 to January 1794, and *L'Etoile Américaine, Journal Historique, Politique, Critique et Moral*, published by Tanguy, in Philadelphia, beginning March 1794. Well! The advertisements on marronage are in the same style as those in the Saint-Domingue press then in its decline and at the point of disappearing. Of course, we are concerned here with ads from colonists who were proprietors in Saint-Domingue and now emigrated to the United States: Victoire Gérard, who identified himself as a Frenchman from Saint-Domingue, Mme. de Chambreu, Mme. F. Lavaus, Widow Desmarais, Payen Boisneuf, M. Caradeux, all formerly inhabitants of Saint-Domingue. By the same token we make note only of those slaves who have gone Maroon and who are declared to be male or female creole blacks from Saint-Domingue. The word "Maroon" in 1793 and 1794 was still frequently used, much more so than the chaste term "fugitive," having so much the same meaning that here its use was a matter of playing with words.

Here then, are a few examples from which one may, by the way, note that there seems to be a sensible amelioration in dress, though it must not be forgotten that, on the one hand, these are domestic slaves and thus enjoying some little privilege and, on the other hand, that the climate differed from that of Saint-Domingue, requiring a frock coat or jackets against the winters:

—Alexander, Negro Indian, straight hair, wearing vest and pants of coarse dark gray cloth under a coat and on his head a white kerchief.

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\*"We'll cut you to pieces, we'll leave you only a scorched earth. Then we'll withdraw to our hills and hide there."

—Alexis, a Congo black, eighteen years old, dressed in a gray shirt and two vests, one puce colored, the other gray. Pants also gray.

—Caesar, wearing a vest and a long-tailed coat of blue material. Speaks only a few words of English.

—Sophie, mulattress, long face and curly hair, often dressed in white or as an Indian.

—Théodore, creole from Saint-Domingue, wearing a long frock coat of white cashmere, striped pants, and high button shoes.

—Pierre-Louis, Negro belonging to Payen Boisneuf of Saint-Domingue, thirty-five years old, and wearing a little gold ring in one of his ears. Plays the violin.

—Joseph Sanon, dressed in a green jacket, a motley-colored shirt, and a gray pair of pants sailor fashion.

—A young Negro, sixteen or seventeen years old, usually wears jacket and pants of brown woolen fabric and a green coat and shoes with round buckles. . . .

Clearly, even though they had been transplanted, the Saint-Domingue blacks did not lose their lust for liberty. This, above all, is the meaning of the marronage occurring in Philadelphia and described by the local newspapers. The diversity of these attempts demonstrates, after all, the same fierce unconditional fighting spirit against slavery. As such, it is a landmark in the revolutionary ideal which, following the example of Hatuey in Cuba, would inspire Jean Kina in Martinique. In fact, we will again come across this Maroon leader of Saint-Domingue fomenting an 1800 revolt of free Africans in the neighboring island. Jean Nika was then—a new direction to a life of perils and adventures—colonel in the British army. He had just married a young black girl of fourteen, Adelaide, daughter of Antoine Quimard, a free black and master mason at Fort-Royal.<sup>14</sup> As for the celebrated Jean-François, he retired to Cuba where he provoked uprisings in the Orient region and in the immediate environs of Havana.<sup>15</sup>

Once again, around the natural pride of the Africans of Saint-Domingue, people incapable of accepting slavery, there was being outlined, and even more deeply so, that call to liberty transformed now into tradition, becoming an apostolate—an apostolate to be brilliantly affirmed by Toussaint Louverture and, in the wake of the genius of Bréda, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and Alexandre Pétion. In the process they would demonstrate to America the meaning of liberty and fraternal mutual aid, the true cornerstones of Pan-Americanism.

That suddenly these extraordinary men should have surged to the fore could not have been a matter of mere chance.



Behind them lay a historical explanation. They were links in a long lineage, knotted to the sufferings of slavery and colonial injustices and matured in the tradition of liberty and of the rehabilitation of a race. . . . The most significant lesson provided by the step by step, year by year study of the history of marronage is the discovery of the roots and the growth of the indivisible tree of liberty. It is this very tree that is our genealogical tree, marked with the profiles of the Maroons and with the anguished visage of the Saint-Domingue slave, ancestor of the Haitian community.

Here follows a chronological account of marronage that for the first time groups the main elements of the known or still unexplored data.

#### *1499-52—First African Slaves . . . First Maroons*

The history of marronage begins with the Discovery and will remain the permanent reaction of the slave against exploitation by the Spanish, then French masters; it will continue to be an insurmountable cause of insecurity and problems. In 1499 the first African slaves, shipped from Spain, began to arrive in Hispaniola.<sup>16</sup> A royal decree dated 29 March 1503 confirms this and makes mention of the runaways from among these blacks as described by Ovando:

With respect to the Negro slaves which you say we should not send because those there have fled we will order that it be done as you request.<sup>17</sup>

It is to these African rebels that Governor Ovando attributes the recrudescence of the spirit of revolt manifested by the Indians to such a degree that Christopher Columbus, the virtuous admiral, recommended in his instructions of 9 April 1494 to Pedro Margarit that he "cut the noses and the ears of those who run away . . . "entre otras cosas que se corten a los Indios que furten, las narices y las orejas."<sup>18</sup>

The fact is that Ovando at all times knowing full well the facts of the situation made clear both his uneasiness about the worsening conditions and his opposition to the continued shipment of blacks to the island:

He also rid the colony of several persons of bad character [writes Father Charlevoix] and he opposed as much as he could the sending of Negroes to the Indies, having observed that the earliest of those who came to the Spanish isle ran off among the natives to whom they taught everything bad, of which they were capable and which made them much more difficult to control.<sup>19</sup>

Father Charlevoix refers again and again to the spirit of rebellion of the Africans imported to Hispaniola who would continue to be accused of contaminating the timid, docile natives of the island. He writes:

These island people are clearly diminishing in number, moreover to get any

of them one needs to be a friend of the Admiral or else have credit at Court. The example provided by Nicuesa gave several people the idea of going to the lesser Antilles to carry off some Caribs. One of the inhabitants armed a caravelle with this in mind and made the run down to Guadaloupe, but he found the barbarians to be on the alert and without having taken a single slave he was forced to withdraw, having suffered losses. Others were somewhat more fortunate but they by no means retrieved their expenses and as the Indians began to die off it became necessary to resort to the blacks of Africa without whom the best established Colonies in the New World would be, for the most part, nothing of consequence. Since the days of the Great Commander they had begun to introduce a few blacks in the Indies, but they were barely tolerated and there was, in fact, an edict of His Catholic Majesty against this novelty which Ovando had always opposed. This governor was fearful that these people, apparently intractable and proud, might revolt if their numbers increased and might entice the natives into revolting with them; but soon there was a change of sentiment. Necessity required they be used, and in the process it became clear that they were not really understood. Actually, besides the fact that one Negro does as much work as six Indians, he quickly accommodates himself to slavery, for which he seems to be born; he does not easily become upset, requires very little to live on, and in spite of a barely adequate diet, continues nevertheless to be robust and strong. Quite naturally, he has some small bit of pride, but all that is needed to cow him is to show him still more of this and to let him feel by the dint of the lash that he has masters. What is to be marveled at is that punishment, although at times carried to the bounds of cruelty, does not cause him to lose his stoutness and that ordinarily he harbors fairly little resentment because of it.<sup>20</sup>

Las Casas was the most enthusiastic in recommending to the Crown the sending of Africans to Hispaniola in order to relieve the misfortune of the poor Indians. Fiercely he pleaded the cause of the Indians, invoking with horror

the captivity of those who are born free, the practice of mutilating with the lash these Innocents whose only crime against us is their inability to sustain the labors we heap upon them, our act of inundating their land under a deluge of blood, of stripping them of their very necessities and of scandalizing them by the most shameful excesses.<sup>21</sup>

It was cynically implied that the crime would not be the same once it was no longer a question of Indians but, instead, of Africans.

The color question, just as the whip, malnourishment, branding<sup>22</sup> and torture, was entering—already!—the colonization scene, and the same exploitation that was established at that time would be carried on for three centuries with the same methods, the same barbarity:

It was suggested to Her Majesty that if she wished to save such valuable



colonies it was absolutely necessary to send them a great number of negroes. They had made up their minds to replace the Indians, who were entirely lacking in Saint-Domingue, with Negroes: but those new Slaves were poor Miners and since that time the mines have remained closed. In recompense, the Negroes were very good for the Manufacture of Sugar<sup>23</sup> and one can imagine what this Merchandise produced in those times because we are commonly assured that the magnificent palaces of Madrid, and of Toledo which were the work of Charles V were built entirely from the income just from the entry rights for Sugar from the Spanish Isle. However, it can well be believed that the Blacks were not in these early days treated too kindly by people accustomed to regarding the Indians as animals devoid of reason, for other than the fact that in features and color the latter were much closer to the Europeans than the former, the slavery in which the indigenous people were held was based uniquely on the right of might, while in contrast the Negroes, having been bought and sold by their own compatriots, it seemed that we needed to have fewer scruples about making them feel the full brunt of servitude.<sup>24</sup>

From 1517, an ordinance of the Most Christian King authorized the transfer of four thousand Africans to the four Greater Antilles.<sup>25</sup> It was a Sir Flamand who obtained this license which he sold, for twenty-three thousand ducats, to the Genovese, who, in turn, raised "to extreme the price of their Negroes." So speculation on the slave traffic to America was beginning to draft the rough sketch which from then on was being written on what the colonization was to be.<sup>26</sup>

In summary, the Indian was considered incapable of acquitting the hard labor to which he was not accustomed. When he was almost completely exterminated, they resorted in compassion to the evidence that "his color brings him much closer to the Europeans," that these indigenous people of the island were in any case a free people and that it was a crime to enslave these "children of God." Since no matter what the cost it was necessary to insure the prosperity of the colonies, a vain attempt was made to abduct as slaves Caribs from the Lesser Antilles. These raids being difficult and the few recruits thus obtained being revealed as fragile and unsuited to the mines as well as to agriculture, they thought to import Africans for domestication in all the provinces, a considerable commerce in which Spain was already engaged. There were both advantages and disadvantages in the use of these African slaves. From the beginning, Ovando took a stand against such an option because of the native pride of the blacks and the spirit of revolt with which the first Africans to the isle infused the Indians. But the colonists would entertain no alternative. The belief was that the whip and torture would succeed with these African rebels, with the advantage that, once they were thus broken in, there would be obtained from them a greater output by six to one in comparison with the Indian, and that the Africans were by nature robust and hardworking and capable of standing up even under a regime of undernourishment. Even morality would be free from

jeopardy since these blacks were barbarous, born to be slaves and to be sold abroad by their own brothers!

Every favorable element, including the economic factor and even religious scruples, was seized for organizing the exploitation of the Africans in Hispaniola. Africans were then imported to the island. They were treated as beasts. Marronage was born. Ovando describes its existence ten years after the discovery and only four years after the arrival of the first African slaves. In 1522, the first great revolt of African slaves, in a sugar mill belonging to Don Diego Columbus, is described, and from that time, marronage spread rapidly:

What is certain is that their patience, although they have more of this than any other people on Earth was soon tried to the very limit. They then put together a plan and even conceived the hope of regaining their liberty. The revolt began with those who were in service to the Admiral. D. Diego had a Sugar Mill near the Capital where he had a hundred slaves working, most of them blacks. The twenty-seventh of December of the year 1522, some twenty of these latter joined with an equal number from another sugar mill belonging to the Licenciado Lebron and having found means to procure arms fell upon some Spaniards and, taking no chances, killed them and took the road to the town of Azua with the idea of surprising the town and, after having pillaged it, making a juncture with Cacique Henry. The Admiral, who was the first to be warned of their march, immediately with a handful of men followed on their heels after having given orders that he should be followed by a body of regular troops or local militia. On the second day he reached the banks of the Nizao River, and resolved there to await his reinforcements. He learned that the rebels had entered the house of one Michael de Castro and wreaked havoc there, killing a Castillian, carrying off a Negro and a dozen Indians, that from there they had moved within a league of Occoa where they had camped, with the intention of pillaging at daybreak a sugar mill that Zuaza had nearby; that they were resolved to kill all the Christians there and to reinforce their troops with the 120 Blacks there and with these reinforcements to go and seize the town of Azua. Michael de Castro was with the little band of the Admiral; on hearing what had happened at his residence he with two others repaired there quickly without informing his General and he found things there to be as reported. A fourth Spaniard having joined him at the spot, he sent to tell D. Diego that he was going to follow up the Blacks with the idea of harassing them so that they would not be able to undertake any action before arrival of the troops and that he was requesting him to send help. The Admiral immediately dispatched eight horsemen and some footsoldiers riding croup; and Castro, who had had sufficient time to learn about the weakness of the Blacks believing that he could defeat them with the help of these reinforcements prepared to attack them. On their side, the Africans seeing a handful of Spaniards coming at them drew themselves up in fairly good order and sustained the first charge in good style; but they were so buffeted on the second charge they had not the courage to await a third. Castro suffered an arm pierced by a stick



burned at one end, which in no way deterred him from looking for his Blacks and his dozen Indians, who at the sound of his voice came out of hiding and joined him. The Admiral arrived about midday with all his men and had the fugitives pursued, few of whom escaped and as they were hanged from the nearest tree as soon as they were caught, the whole road was soon lined with their bodies. This spectacle so intimidated the Blacks, that they have not since dared to revolt against the Spaniards of this island.<sup>27</sup>

If, from the beginning of the earliest days, the dimensions of the colonization, its motivations, objectives, and basic rules are seen to be sketched in sharp outline, at the same time a like sketch of marronage is drawn. Blacks are seen escaping from the first sugar mills, bearing arms or "sticks burned at the end," hiding themselves in the woods and secure hiding places whence they sally forth on raids, coöpting and carrying off other slaves; "they are pursued by the militia and regular troops, hanged from trees along the road" when they are captured, with the idea that such exemplary punishment will intimidate the work gangs. Thus are indicated the respective positions of the colonials and the slaves in the long Maroon battles about to begin and to continue uninterrupted for three centuries.

*First Rebellion at Bahoruco; Enriquillo Known as Cacique Henry  
Holds Out for Fourteen Years—1519-1533*

Spain consolidated her conquest over the dead bodies of Indians decimated en masse by harsh labor conditions which corresponded neither with their diet, based on manioc flour, nor with their very poor physical resistance. Added to this were the ravages of a smallpox epidemic which carried off a great number of those who had not succumbed to hunger or fatigue, or to the cruel treatment at the hands of the subjects of the Spanish Crown, adventurers from Séville, Valencia, and Madrid. Ovando had had cities and towns built everywhere, from Cape Tiburon to the port of Jaquimo (Jacmel), from Puerto-Plata to Vera-Paz, Puerto Rea, Santa-Maria and Yaguana (Cul-de-Sac, Port-au-Prince and Léogâne).<sup>28</sup> Hispaniola exported to Spain gold, valuable lumber and sugar, extracted by merciless exploitation of the last surviving Indians and of the African slaves whose importation increased at a rate that, in spite of everything, was quite inadequate for the need for strong arms.

In 1519, the Indian population, which numbered a million when Columbus's caravels arrived, had already been 90 percent decimated. These are dreadful figures that betray the barbarity and the surprising rapidity of this doubtless unparalleled genocide. There had been promulgated, on 27 December 1512, some thirty laws which were to become a model for the Code Noir, issued in 1685 by the French Crown, for the disciplining of slaves. These constituted an Indian Code designed to regulate in the name of Christianity, alas!, the enslavement of the natives. To wit: perpetual slavery, trans-

planting of populations, grouping of Indian huts by fours, the requirement to build these huts and to cultivate a house garden, masters to provide a few tubers, potatoes, yams, manioc, and corn, and a dozen hens and a rooster for every fifty Indians, and separation of the slaves by breaking family or tribal links.

The code provided that on Sundays and holy days masters were to add to the daily ration of cassava a "little pound of meat in substitution for fish or sardines." In truth, holy day or not, the Indian, constrained to forced labor, lived "on herbs and roots." Nor did women in advanced pregnancy escape the daily forced labor.

Multiple suicides sometimes "by groups of one hundred" are described. Many saved themselves by finding shelter in the forest and the mountains in order to escape this unbearable misery that the first blacks imported from Africa were beginning to share with them. These latter were more robust and a great deal less docile.

It was in this era that Enriquillo, called Cacique Henry, surged to the fore. A native of Cacique Bohéchio's kingdom of Xaragua, and son of the beauty Anacoana, he was born in Bahoruco and spent his earliest days there. Baptized with the Spanish name Enrique, whence Enriquillo, he was taken into a convent of the Franciscan monks after the massacre of Alcantara in 1503.<sup>29</sup> He spoke Spanish well, and was tall and well built. According to Oviedo and Las Casas, he was "sober in eating and drinking," aloof, confiding in no one, a man who spoke little and slept even less. He became the slave of a colonist in San Juan de La Maguana, Francisco de Valenzuela, and began his servitude as a keeper of the corral. At the death of his master he passed, by right of succession, to the service of the son, André de Valenzuela. Las Casas depicts this new master as being a cruel young man of dissolute morals, and filled with arrogance. One evening he attempted to violate Mencia, an Indian who had become the wife of Enriquillo within the Church of the Holy Mother. At the end of his patience, the slave made the long journey to lay his complaint before the Royal Audience of Saint-Domingue but without success. Having exhausted all recourse to justice, he then decided to withdraw to the mountains of Bahoruco with his people and a number of trained, armed slaves. There he again assumed his authority as cacique, rejoining Guarocuya, a Nytaíno and a relative of the unfortunate Queen Anacoana, and who, since 1503, had gone into hiding there. His rebellion was to last fourteen years. It would end only after long, humiliating bargaining sought by the Spaniards who were unnerved by the increasing threat of a Bahoruco state and particularly after failing to contain the incessant Maroon incursions which extended as far north as Caracol.

Enriquillo died in 1535 at the age of about thirty-five,<sup>30</sup> leaving behind the glorious memory of his heroic struggle to free his brothers and sisters. Saint-Méry, in his evocation of Cacique Henry's rebellion, has left us this precious description of the peace talks which provided the epilogue:



So desirous of bringing to an end a war which compromised the tranquility of the entire colony, the Emperor Charles V directed François de Barrio Nuovo, whom he had appointed governor of Castilla de Oro, to appease Cacique Henry and to deliver him a Royal letter. After arranging his plans with Admiral of the Island Don Luis Colombo, Christopher's grandson, and with the large number of people brought to Saint-Domingue for that purpose, Nuovo proceeded by caravel to Aquin and from there traveled over the mountains until he could make contact with Cacique Henry, who then agreed to make peace. Nuovo then returned to Jacmel where his caravel awaited him. The details historians have provided on the great care with which the Cacique hid his place of retreat when compared with the fact that, debarked at Aquin, Barrio Nuovo seeks out the Cacique, approaches a lake, meets him and with him re-embarks for Jacmel, confirm on the one hand the Cacique's stay at Etang-Salé, for this reason called Henriquille or Little Henry, and on the other hand lends credence to the idea that the canton of Anses à Pitre still to the present time contains evidence of precautions employed by the Cacique to avoid falling into the power of his enemies. Actually, at Anse-à-Boeuf there is a semicircular retrenchment about four and a half feet deep, tied in at each end to a mountain and lined with two rows of little adjoining beams serving no doubt as support for the entrenchment. The surrounding caves are filled with human bones. Now Anse-à-Boeuf is connected with Etang-Salé by a gorge which widens at a point called Fond Trélenguët and which runs to the Saint-Jean de la Croix des Bouquets district to make the connection by which Plaine du Cul-de-Sac is reached through Fond Parisien. It is a bare twenty-five years ago that this connection described by several hunters was at last verified. . . .<sup>31</sup>

Emile Nau, one of our historians, has already devoted an interesting account covering the Bahoruco Rebellion, the feats of arms, the perils menacing the colony, the parleying, then the rejoicing occasioned by the peace treaty, and the mandate to recognize and proclaim the freedom of the Indians. He has also breathed life into the rather fascinating image of the Cacique Hatuey who, with many of his subjects and rebels, gained Cuban shores by canoe after the Xaragua massacre and the sack of Yaguana (Léogâne).

How scrupulously and with what tacit accord have Haitian historians, with few exceptions, neglected to claim the glory of Hatuey or of Cacique Henry! It is as if they had decided to leave a few crumbs to others for illuminating a history clearly not as rich and less heroic than their own. Hatuey and Henry have become Dominican and Cuban heroes respectively. And, in their recall of the past of this island called Ayti in spite of the separation from our Eastern provinces, only grudgingly have our historians evoked the memory of this epic or even of the Indians who preceded us on this land under the same sky. A curious disdain . . . a mysterious rejection of solidarity attributable no doubt to our aggressive pride in a certainly more legitimate

African kinship. We nevertheless can reject neither history, nor geography, nor, blended with ebony and copper, those roucou-tinted\* roots. . . .

### 1679—Padrejean

In this year a slave, Padrejean, is described as having been for some years in the service of a Spaniard. He had killed his master and sought refuge on Tortuga whence he passed over to Saint-Domingue and

cleared some land in the sector called Massacre now known as Saint-Louis, opposite Tortuga's western shore. Since a perverse nature does not readily right itself and since one evil deed leads easily to another, Padrejean corrupted some of our slaves with whom he planned to strangle all the French in the area and then withdraw to the Spaniards whose pardon he expected to win by virtue of this second perfidy.

In those days there were rather few Blacks in the colony, almost all of whom had been kidnapped from the Spaniards. A number of them wanted to return to their previous masters; for this reason they readily joined Padrejean in his conspiracy. On the first day he recruited twenty-five and having armed them with everything at hand he led them through the countryside as far as Port-Margot, pillaging and massacring on all sides. He then set up on Tarare, a very high mountain between the Sainte-Anne and Saint-Louis sections, where he constructed with trees a sort of retrenchment. From this point he ravaged all the neighboring plantations, enticing or taking Blacks by force and killing whatever French they could surprise or catch in some remote spot.

Mr. de Pouancey, who was at Port-de-Paix had great difficulty in reducing this rabble. They occupied an almost inaccessible terrain, were strongly positioned and were doubtlessly prepared to defend themselves to the very last. It was repugnant to him to expose fine men to death at the hands of vile Slaves, all of whose blood would not sufficiently avenge the death of a single Frenchman and it was doubtful if all the troops which he was then to direct against them would suffice to rout them; also he noticed that, when he mentioned sending them on the attack, not one wanted to accept the risks of an expedition in which neither honor nor profit could be expected.

However, the situation worsened and each day was marked either by the desertion of several Slaves or the death of a number of colonists. Finally, a band of twenty Buccaneers chanced to pass by Port-de-Paix. The Governor sent for them, explained his unenviable situation and told them they would be rendering him a true service if they would attempt to deliver him from this handful of Slaves who were ravaging the entire Coast.

The Buccaneers accepted the commission with pleasure and immediately carried it out. They approached Tarare Mountain and climbed it with a dispatch that frightened the Blacks, forced the stronghold and killed seven of these wretches, among them Padrejean. The rest fled when they saw them-

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\*A red vegetable dye used on face and body by the indigenous people of Ayti.



selves leaderless; the Buccaneers unsuccessfully pursued them and they reached Spanish soil where they were well received.<sup>32</sup>

### 1681—*The King Is Distressed by Slave Desertions*

The Africans, noted César de Rochefort, "are usually proud and arrogant. . . . They run away and escape into the mountains. They are then called maroon blacks."<sup>33</sup>

In 1681, there were in Saint-Domingue 1063 male Africans, 314 boys, 210 mulattoes, 725 black women as against 1421 colonists and 1565 indentured persons.<sup>34</sup> "Nothing," declared the King, "is more necessary for the safety of the settlers and the prevention of slave revolts than strict observation of the regulations against allowing said blacks to move about without passes from their masters."

### 1684—*A Recommendation to Strangle Maroons*

An islander recommends:

Those who go maroon for more than twelve days ought to be hanged and strangled, their owners being reimbursed. If several Blacks are caught have them draw lots and hang only one with the others looking on.

### 1685—*The Code Noir and Marronage*

A Mr. de Cussy notes in a letter that "the blacks are formidable local enemies."

The King's edict touching on the policing of the French islands of America henceforth known as the Code Noir appears in March 1685. It prescribed the following measures for the submission of the blacks and for the fight against morronage:

—Observance of any religion other than the Roman Catholic Apostolic is forbid. Slaves are forbidden to carry offensive weapons, including large sticks, upon penalty of the whip and confiscation of such arms to the profit of whomever shall seize them. Slaves belonging to different Masters are likewise forbidden to assemble, by night or day under pretext of weddings or otherwise, whether at one of their master's or elsewhere, and still less on the highways or in isolated areas, upon penalty of the whip and *fleur-de-lys*, and in isolated areas upon penalty of corporal punishment never less than the whip and the *fleur-de-lys*, and in case of frequent offenses and other aggravating circumstances may be punished with death.

—Qualified thefts including thefts of stallions, mares, mules, bulls and cows by slaves or freedmen shall be punishable by corporal punishment, including death if the case so merits.

—A slave who has been a fugitive for a month from the date he has been officially reported shall have his ears cut off and be shoulder branded with a fleur-de-lys; and should he repeat for another month from the date of denunciation shall have his hamstring cut and be branded with a fleur-de-lys on the other shoulder; for the third offense he shall be punished by death.

—Freedmen who shelter fugitive slaves in their homes shall be required to pay their Masters a fine of three hundred pounds of sugar for each such day of detention per slave. . . .

—Such is our pleasure, and to the end that this will be consistent and permanent. . . . Louis, by the Grace of God King of France and Navarre.

#### *1691—A New Plot; New Executions of Maroons*

There was widespread rumor of a great armed preparation at Portobello to chase the French out of Saint-Domingue. It seemed quite apparent that the English had spread the rumor to intimidate the French and prevent them from undertaking anything elsewhere; nevertheless, Mr. Deslandes thought it best to take all precautions, after which, having returned home, he had hardly been there a half-hour when a horseman rode up in great haste to warn him of a plot by two hundred Blacks to massacre all their masters and seize the plantations. Upon certain evidence, two Blacks in the conspiracy had been seized and had named the leaders. They were brought to Mr. Deslandes, who had them put to the question to divulge their accomplices, and they named several who were likewise interrogated. Arrangements were made for the trial of the guilty ones, and to that end the Major convened an assembly of Officers of the Militia and of Justice, over which he presided. Two days later two of the leaders of the plot were broken live; three others had a leg cut off the next day, and two others were also condemned to being broken live, but they were in flight.<sup>35</sup>

#### *1691—Uprising at Port-de-Paix*

Janot Marin and Georges Dollot, called Pierrot, were burned alive for having harbored a plan to "massacre all the whites in the Port-de-Paix quarter including women and children at the breast."<sup>36</sup>

#### *1694—The Jamaica Maroons Want to Come to Saint-Domingue*

In the hills of Jamaica there are seven thousand fugitive slaves who "want to come to Saint-Domingue."

#### *1697—Gathering of Slaves in Quartier-Morin*

In May, a gathering of three hundred slaves is detected in the Quartier-Morin of Petite-Anse.



*1700—Measures for Punishing Maroons*

Gallifet's ordinance of 16 August inflicting severe punishment on Maroons including cutting of the hamstrings.

*1701—The Resistance Continues*

The negroes destroy themselves, without hesitation hanging themselves and cutting their throats, notes a memoir.

*1704—Uprising in Cap*

Letter to Mr. de Charitte, 25 July 1704:<sup>37</sup>

The blacks of Cap are engaged in a plot to strangle every white in this quarter at night.

*1705—Severe Punishment for Maroons*

The Intendant Bégon proposes to castrate slaves captured after a third flight.<sup>38</sup> An ordinance threatens with severe punishment freedmen harboring Maroons. On 16 March 1705, the Conseil de Léogâne prohibits slaves to carry arms and to assemble.<sup>39</sup>

*1706—Maroon Crimes*

A regulation of the Conseil Supérieur of Léogâne denounces the Maroons:

... some of whom gather in the woods and live there exempt from the service of their masters, with no other leader than he whom they elected; others under cover of the canefields by day lie in wait by night on the highways to rob passers-by, and move from plantation to plantation to carry off whatever food or animals they can find and hiding in the house of their comrades who usually are participants in their thieving knowing well the situation on the plantations and advising said fugitives so that they can take measures to carry off their thefts undetected.

*1707—Constabulary Instituted*

In the North the constabulary is organized for pursuing fugitive slaves.

*1712—Marronage Disturbs the King*

In an ordinance of 30 December 1712 the King reacts against the cruel treatment which impels slaves to run away from such inhumanity.

*1714—An Attempt to Extradite Maroons*

A *cedula* of the King of Spain<sup>40</sup> orders the return of runaway slaves to the French sector.

### 1715—*Help Against the Maroons Solicited from Spain*

Blénac assigns Colonel Dubois, commandant at Cul-de-Sac, to arrange the extradition of Maroons and to request the help of the Spanish authorities in a joint roundup of Maroons on the frontiers.<sup>41</sup>

### 1717—*Slaves Forbidden to Carry Knives and Arms*

From what has been reported to us the slaves use a straight, sharp knife vulgarly called the Flemish knife; and in defiance of the ordinances merchants favor them and the masters tolerate it; and as this abuse is very prejudicial and could lead to dire consequences . . . we most expressly prohibit and forbid any slave, under whatever pretext, to make use of any knife, straight or Flemish, upon penalty of wearing an iron collar for four hours and of the lash if repeated; we enjoin the owners of said slaves to divest them within a week . . . of all Flemish knives and other offensive and defensive arms with which they may be armed upon penalty of a fine of ten pounds; under penalty of a fine of one hundred pounds merchants are forbidden to sell or credit any of the said knives or forbidden arms; we command every inhabitant and provost marshal to regularly make the prescribed visits to the houses of the slaves and relieve them of all offensive and defensive arms . . . excepting however arms given by the masters to the drivers. . . .<sup>42</sup>

### 1719—*Michel Is Captured*

A new expedition against Bahoruco sets out from Cul-de-Sac and captures Michel, the Maroon chieftain, the soul of the resistance in the mountains.<sup>43</sup>

### 1720—*Slave Meetings in Maribaroux*

As a result of meetings held by slaves in Maribaroux to name their leaders the ordinance of 11 January 1720 reviews Code Noir provisions against slave gatherings. In this year alone runaway slaves total a thousand.<sup>44</sup> Maroon bands increase in Fond du Bourg.<sup>45</sup>

### 1721—*Intensification of the Fight Against Marronage*

By an ordinance of 27 March 1721, strengthening of the constabulary for hunting down Maroons. Creation of a special campaign whose officers were "authorized to constitute themselves a provost court in the field for judging arrested slaves and meting out punishment on the spot." At the same time a guard corps was placed in the Massacre passage to deny the slaves all communication with the East.<sup>46</sup>

### 1722—*The Problem of Extraditing Maroons Continues*

The King of Spain issues another cedula confirming the one of 1714.



*1723—The Ocoa Affair*

At the moment of extradition, 128 Maroons are rescued by the people of Ocoa and found "near Saint-Domingue"—the village of Saint-Laurent des Mines, named after the African nation to which they belong.<sup>47</sup>

*1724—Colas Legs-Cut-Off*

Father Charlevoix reports that

One must not always rely on slaves being faithful. . . . Blacks in recalcitrant groups should be immediately dispersed by stick blows and bull pizzles (rigoises); if one delays, then later decides to fight them, they will defend themselves well. As soon as they perceive that death is inevitable, they don't care how it comes, and the slightest success makes them almost invincible.<sup>48</sup>

There are so many new plantations. The number of slaves brought in each year, although very large, does not meet the demand. Many of the new arrivals die, others flee. In the early months of 1724 Maroon depredations disturbed the peace in the North. Over some four or five years there were complaints that the required tracking down [of Maroons] should have been effected. Chastenoye then undertook to dislodge the runaways from their hills. But the freedmen refused to march against those they considered allies. It took an ordinance from the Governor of Cap and the threat of severe penalties to get them to do so. The leader was captured on Mantègre Hill below the town of Tannerie between Grande-Rivière and Limonade. It was Colas Jambes Coupées [Colas Legs-Cut-Off]: he was executed at Bois de Lance.<sup>49</sup> Mantègre Hill, with its rather steep slopes, sometimes served as a refuge for the Maroons. Colas, surnamed Jambes Coupées, Mr. Doze's slave who was executed at Bois de Lance in June, 1724, made it all the more famous over some four or five years because of the ravages by his band.<sup>50</sup>

*1726—Horrible Afflictions Which Few Colonists Escaped*

A 1726 document declares that Maroons

are causing terrible disorders in the Colonies as are negro poisoners whose crime is very common and the effects of which are experienced by almost every resident.<sup>51</sup>

*1728—Bahoruco Continues to Give Trouble*

Around Bahoruco the roundups are continued. One operation succeeds in the capture of forty-six Maroons who are taken to Cap and condemned to chains.

*1730—Plymouth Killed*

In 1730 the Grand-Anse quarter, which had only five plantations, was rav-

aged by Nippes Maroons. A resident of the quarter was charged with conducting the hunt. He overtook the band on the Anse du Clerc heights, killed twenty-three and took many prisoners; among those killed was the leader, Plymouth, whose name has been given to a section of the country (Pestel and Jérémie).<sup>52</sup>

This canton, Plymouth, shared its southern border with the Caïmites. The first French residents of Grande-Anse who came there because of its immense supply of wild pig meat and wild beef named it Fond-du-Bourg. When in 1720 an attempt was made to reestablish Grande-Anse Parish, its large area and the nature of its mountains had already attracted runaway slaves who at various times formed bands which the government felt had to be broken up. At a later period the leader of one of these bands was a Jamaica black purchased by a resident of Cayes. Notorious for his raids and for the skill with which he evaded all pursuit, he finally provoked an all-out expedition against him. Some mulattoes from Plaine des Cayes caught up with and killed him after a defense that made his defeat even more memorable; so much so, that the place where he fell was given his name. Thus, Fond-du-Bourg became Plymouth.<sup>53</sup> Generally speaking, Plymouth is made up of four mountain chains one of which ends up at Macaya in the West. Thus it forms a part of the range that marks the two sides opposite the colony's southern sector extending from Macaya to Hotte Mountain. These mountains then terminated at Cap Tiburon.<sup>54</sup>

### *1733—Again Bahoruco and the Constabulary*

Thirty-three Maroons were captured there. The new increases in fugitives require continual hunts. The Ordinance of 21 January 1733 reestablished the constabulary. It was the period when the Siamese sickness\* raged and fear spread throughout the colony. Under the jurisdiction of each court the constabulary comprised a provost master, and two lieutenants; Petit-Goâve had five officers (*exempts*) and fifty-two archers; Cap's had three officers, thirty-nine archers.

All the archers had to be free colored men—the following year slaves hoping thus to gain freedom were admitted to the corps. Very early abuses were committed even to the point of sidetracking it from its proper function. It was now necessary to forbid army and militia officers to retain constabulary archers under their orders and service.<sup>55</sup>

### *1734—Polydor's Death*

The names Piton [Peak] des Nègres, Piton des Flambeaux, Piton des Ténèbres, and Crête à Congo all bring to mind the periods when runaways settled in these heights which were almost inaccessible and not simply for want of roads. We still remember Polydor and his band, his killings and pillaging and especially how difficult it was to catch him.<sup>56</sup> The conformation of these mountains and those of the neighboring parishes, their steep peaks, the rivers and ravines subdivided into numerous branches and some-

\*Yellow fever.



how multiplying themselves in their winding ways, the cliffs and steeps and the nearness of the Spanish sector when in need of another retreat; everything serves to make these places the favorite shelters of the runaway slaves who have the option of a slothful life disturbed with difficulty or, at the risk of paying with their lives for their cumulative crimes, a plan for laying waste the various areas vulnerable to their incursions. It was due to a decision of this latter type that the dependency of Trou had to suffer long vexations caused by Polydor at the head of his band of armed blacks, who were finally destroyed by the concerted effort of the people of Trou and its environs. The widespread fear occasioned by Polydor's atrocities was so great that his destruction was considered a service rendered the entire colony; Laurent, the slave called C  zar, who collaborated with his master, Mr. Nantel, in cornering the scoundrel in the savannah which since bears his name, where he was shot (rather than surrender himself) on 28 June 1734, obtained from the administrators the freedom they had promised the slave who would capture Polydor, dead or alive. From the colonial treasury, Mr. Nantel was awarded a meager indemnity covering, no doubt, partial expenses, for fifteen hundred pounds could not pay for the service he had performed, nor provide consolation for having been crippled in so doing.<sup>57</sup>

During the same period the Danish colonies called for help against Maroon depredations and, in 1734, a general insurrection broke out in Jamaica, where the Maroons built strongholds in the Blue Mountains.

#### *1737—Versailles Still Disturbed*

A letter from the minister to Governor de Larnage enjoined him to make sure that masters treated their slaves humanely and provided them the necessary food and clothing, advising that this was the surest means for preventing their seditions and revolts.<sup>58</sup>

#### *1738—The Battle Against Poisoning*

A decree was published against the practice of poisoning.

#### *1740—Maroons Invade Mirebalais*

The constabulary moved in pursuit of Maroons who had invaded the town of Mirebalais. They killed seven, captured fourteen, all naked in the woods; twenty-three escaped.

#### *1741—Institution of Chain Gang*

To further intimidate slaves, the chain gang, with the *fleur-de-lys* cheek brand, was instituted on 14 March 1741.

Slaves were to be employed for limited periods or for life on the fortifications or other labors undertaken upon royal command. Chain-gang punish-

ment consisted of keeping several of the condemned constantly attached to the same chain and thus putting them to work; generally, the mutual influence of the slaves in the gang was disastrous. They all rivaled each other in laziness, insolence and vice.<sup>59</sup>

#### 1742—*Anse à Pitres Attacked*

The Bahoruco Maroons again appear at Anse à Pitres.

#### 1743—*Confirmation of Capital Punishment for Maroons*

A new royal declaration of 1 February 1743

punishes with death Maroons caught with swords or firearms or even blades other than pocket knives without spring releases or locking action; any theft of sword or firearm by a slave shall be considered a qualified theft, as well as thefts of pirogues, boats, sailboats and other sea vessels.

The constabulary regulations of 1743 set the pay for the capture of Maroons according to canton and governed their status until reclaimed by their owners.

The administrators made the modification that a captured slave was to be sold as a stray after one month, subject to his master's reclaiming him in one year. Clearly, marronage instead of diminishing continuously caused the administration extreme difficulties.<sup>60</sup>

The price on the head of a Maroon in refuge among the Spaniards rose to twenty gourdes.

#### 1744—*Extradition of Maroons*

New agreements on extradition of Maroons: travel and food expenses paid for at points of delivery.

#### 1746—*Rebellion and Poison*

Royal Declaration of 30 December 1746:

ARTICLE X: Upon penalty of physical punishment even death if the case so requires, slaves male and female are forbid to concoct any remedies in powder or whatever form and to undertake the cure of any malady with the exception of snakebite. And further, that slaves who under pretext of preparing snakebite remedies shall have concocted or distributed such means as are not applicable to these cases and can only be serviceable for curing other ills shall be condemned to punishment as prescribed in this article. . . .

Mr. de Larnage declares that of the 150 slaves lost by him since he arrived in the colony in 1737 more than 100 died of poison.<sup>61</sup>



*1747—Pompey's Capture*

East of Cavaillon there is a big hill called Morne Bleu, celebrated for having been the asylum for the negro Pompey whose pillaging and crimes for so long desolated this area. The hill has a number of caves, some rather spacious in which fetishes and other evidence of frequent use by natives are found. It was in one of these caves that Pompey was taken after a vigorous defense.<sup>62</sup>

Larnage offered to pay the Spaniards twenty-five piastres or 150 pounds for each captured Maroon.

*1751—Follow-up on Extradition*

It is estimated that at least three thousand Maroons are "safe with the Spaniards."<sup>63</sup> The colonial authorities delegated a new agent after tentative advances undertaken by de Brémont, officer of the Mirebalais Militia.

*1755—Poison in Contagion*

Poisoning by slaves increased with no recognizable means of combatting the contagion. The courts condemned the guilty; some work gangs were practically decimated by capital punishment ordered by the court. The feeling grew that the ringleaders were not affected by these strong measures; that to catch the leaders, slaves suspected of murdering by poison should be isolated, but it was pointed out that isolation in the colony would be ineffective. The administrators then decided to banish to France those considered dangerous and even carried out this decision in one or two cases. Studies on the kinds of poison in use were ordered. The investigations did nothing to calm minds because they were inconclusive. They concluded with the question as to whether the poisons were vegetable or metallic, whether the slaves or the apothecaries supplies were the source. The cause of all this evil was the very slave whom the colonists were slow in recognizing as the source of their ills, because he was at the same time their wealth.<sup>64</sup>

A note to the minister denounced the freedmen: "Their plantations are the haunts and shelter of many deserters from the slave work gangs."

*1757—Médor Arrested*

The Bahoruco bands were sometimes "more aggressive," at other times "reserved." New hunting parties were launched to little avail; only twelve prisoners were brought in.

The Intendant Lalanne denounced the crime of poisoning (letter of 22 December 1757).

In March of 1757 the African Médor at the time of his arrest declared;

If blacks commit poisoning, the end purpose is to gain freedom. . . . Among those whose only thought is to destroy the colony there is also a secret which the whites know nothing about and of which the free blacks in the main are the cause, using any means to increase their number so as to be strong enough to oppose the whites when necessary.<sup>65</sup>

### 1758—François Macandal

The Jacmel quarter took up arms against the Maroons in the same year that the extraordinary Macandal's eighteen-year period of marronage came to an end.

The slave Macandal born in Africa belonged to Mr. Normand de Mézy's plantation in Limbé. His hand had to be cut off when it was caught in a mill, and they made him an animal keeper. He ran away. During his desertion he became notorious for his poisonings which spread terror among the blacks, all of whom he held in submission. He ran a school for teaching his damnable art, he had agents in every corner of the colony, and death followed at his slightest signal. Finally, he had conceived in his vast plan to remove from the surface of Saint-Domingue every person not a black, and his continuously increasing successes had engendered a fear which made them more certain still. The vigilance of the magistrates and of the government did not avail to discover the means of doing away with this scoundrel, and those misdeeds punished by almost instant death only served to cause more terror. One day the Dufresne plantation slaves<sup>66</sup> in Limbé had organized a large *calenda*.<sup>67</sup> Macandal, who had long been accustomed to impunity, came to take part in the dance. A young black, perhaps because of the impression the presence of this monster had made on him went to Mr. Duplessis to tell him about the *calenda*. Duplessis, a surveyor, and Mr. Trévan, who were at this plantation, had rum dispensed with such prodigality that all the slaves became drunk, and Macandal, in spite of his prudence, became muddle-headed. They arrested him in one of the slave huts whence he was taken to a room at one end of the main house. His hands were tied behind his back and for lack of irons horsehair was used. The two whites wrote to Cap to announce the capture and with two slave domestics they guarded Macandal, all the while keeping two loaded pistols on a table with a light. The guards fell asleep. Macandal aided by two blacks perhaps, freed his hands, extinguished the candle, opened a window in the gable of the house, jumped into the grass and hopping like a magpie reached some coffee trees. A breeze sprung up rattling the window hook, a sound that awakened the guards and with great excitement Macandal was hunted down by dogs and soon recaptured.

Macandal who, had he used the two pistols instead of fleeing, would certainly have escaped was condemned to be burned alive by a Cap Court order dated 10 January 1758. Since he had several times boasted that if the whites took him he would escape via different forms, he declared he would change to a fly to escape the flames. By chance the post to which they attached the chains was rotten and his violent movements caused by



the torment of the flames pulled out the ring bolt and he toppled over the faggots. The blacks cried out: "Macandal is saved"; the terror was extreme; all doors were closed. The Swiss detachment guarding the execution site had it evacuated; the jailer Massé was about to kill him with his sword when upon the orders of the Attorney General he was tied to a plank and thrown into the fire. Although Macandal's body had been burnt to ashes many of the slaves even today believe he did not die under punishment.

The memory of this man for whom no epithet suffices still brings to mind such sinister ideas that the blacks call poisons and the act of poisoning *macandals* and this name among them is become one of the most injurious of addresses. While in prison a Paris artist named Dupont painted a portrait of Macandal and three of his main accomplices and took them to France. His widow having put them up for sale on the Quai de Louvre, Mr. Courrejolles bought and gave them to Mr. Mazères, upon whose death they were again sold. I bought the one of Macandal from a street vendor in Versailles at the corner of the great stable on Paris Avenue. It is an oil portrait beautifully executed. One could write volumes on all that has been said of Macandal but it was left to an unknown to present him in the *Mercure de France* 15 September 1787 as the hero of a tale entitled "A True Story," in which love and jealousy serve as powerful stimuli.<sup>68</sup>

#### *A Letter from Cap, 24 June 1758*

We are in general consternation here, Sir, continuously between life and death. . . . Last January in Limbé about five leagues from here Mr. Tellier's slave François Macandal was arrested. . . . He was for eighteen years a maroon. By day he held out in the mountains and at night he would come down to the neighboring plantations where he had contacts with the slaves. The rascal upon being put to the question named a great number of accomplices—slaves of various masters, whom they arrested. The number of deaths he caused during eighteen years of marronage are innumerable. He was at last executed at five-thirty on January 20th. . . . Since this execution four or five of them are burned each month. Already there have been twenty-four blacks or slaves and three free blacks who have met the same end. But as a result of their being put to the question the constabulary arrests nine or ten others whom they name as accomplices. Thus the number of persons grows accordingly as a criminal is executed. Who knows when this terrible business will end.

Some say the blacks who have been executed poisoned to death thirty to forty whites including their masters, their wives and children. Others claim two hundred to three hundred slaves belonging to different masters. There are planters who had fifty to sixty slaves working on their plantation. In fewer than fifteen days only four or five, sometimes one, remain. We are frightened to see that all the guilty ones are those who work in the big house, those in whom we have most confidence: coachmen, cooks and other domestics. They very carefully pick the occasion when their masters will have twenty-five to thirty guests at table enjoying a feast. They poison the tea, the soup or other dishes. We are afraid to visit one another and don't

know whom to trust, it being impossible to do without the service of these wretches.<sup>69</sup>

I must now tell you how Providence came to the aid of the Colony for so long threatened with total destruction. Last December the court convened to try six or seven slaves who were arrested for poisoning. Four were condemned to the flames, among them a young girl who belonged to a resident of Soufrière, M.V. by name. She was to be executed last. As they were to put the question to her and were about to apply the matches she said she did not want to suffer the fire twice and that she was going to tell all. She named fifty accomplices as many males as females, who were picked up, some in Cap and others in the country. She provided information leading to the arrest of François Macandal their leader. She declared that the Jesuit priest who some time earlier had come to the prison to hear her confession had forbidden her, under penalty of eternal damnation, to reveal her accomplices and directed her rather to suffer all the torments she might be made to endure; but since the whites had not harmed her she was anxious to contribute to their safety. . . . Informed of the conduct of the Jesuit Father the Governor forbade him entry to the jail. All other Reverend Fathers (Jesuits) were likewise prohibited, and this edict was rigorously observed. But the people complain that they were let off lightly, for the whole story is not told. They are suspected of much more.

One reads in another letter that of all the frightful multitude of blacks who have died from poisoning it is noticeable that they have not lost a single one. They and their blacks are the only ones who are safe. It is not difficult to draw conclusions from this.<sup>70</sup>

Of all the Maroon chiefs, none had a greater, more deserved reputation than François Macandal, executed in 1758. This Macandal was a black from Guinea and long-time slave on Plantation Le Normand, in Limbé. Having lost an arm when his hand was caught in a cane mill, he was made an animal keeper. He ran away and hid in the mountains, where he soon exercised the most extraordinary dominance over his companions. In addition to very great leadership skills he possessed all the qualities necessary for reducing and fanaticizing the credulous and primitive creatures around him. "He predicted the future," wrote a contemporary. "He experienced revelations and possessed an eloquence far different from the imitative eloquence of our orators, and much stronger and vigorous. In addition he was possessed of rare courage and the staunchest spirit which he was able to maintain in the face of the most cruel torments and punishments. He had persuaded the negroes he was immortal, and he had indeed imbued them with such terror and such respect that they considered it an honor to sit at his knees and to pay him reverence due only to the Divinity whose envoy he claimed to be. The most beautiful women vied for the honor of being admitted to his bed." (*Mémoire sur la création d'un corps de gens de couleur levé à Saint-Domingue, 1779 A.M.C. Corr. gener. Saint-Domingue, Tome II, C9 Carton XXIX*)

One certain fact is that Macandal was more than and greater than a simple Maroon leader. Not because he disdained the pillaging of plantations,



the sacking of mansions, the stealing of herds and other common slave exploits; but he appears to have envisioned the possibility of making marronage the center of an organized resistance against the whites. He had a notion of the races on Saint-Domingue. One day, amid a crowd, he had brought to him a vase full of water into which he placed three kerchiefs, a yellow, one white, one black. First he pulled out the yellow. "Here," he said, "this stands for the first inhabitants of Saint-Domingue; they were yellow. Here are the present inhabitants." He showed a white kerchief. "And here are the ones who will remain masters of the Island." It was the black kerchief (Notes historiques A.M.C. F3 136 p. 198).

He was able to persuade many blacks that it was he the Creator had sent to Saint-Domingue to effect the destruction of the whites and to free the blacks. In addition, he exercised his ascendancy, not only over the fugitives around him, but also over almost all the slaves in the Cap area. Extraordinarily bold, he frequented plantations without fear to awaken the zeal of his partisans, always untouchable even unknown to the whites for close to six years, making use of this obscurity slowly to pursue the plan that, as he thought, was to assure his triumph. The plan was based on the unleashing of the most terrible scourge ever to be known in Saint-Domingue and in general all over the old slave colonies: poison. . . .

To focus again on Macandal, what made him original was that he linked the ravages of poison with the practice of marronage. If we believe certain documents, he had a plan for destroying all the whites by this method. According to one document I have several times cited:

His orders on this point were carried out with a passive and blind obedience by which the Old Man of the Mountain had been able to lead all his disciples. He caused the death of all the masters and mistresses against whom they harbored some slight resentment. That slave most attached to his master would have felt he was committing a crime against the Divinity had he delayed the slightest in carrying out his orders or if he had not most religiously guarded the secret. For more than six years the colonists were ignorant of the fact that within the bosom of the colony there existed so dangerous a maroon, with the possible exception of the master who had bought him and long ago thought of him as being dead in the woods. At last this negro set about to execute his plan of destruction which he had followed with a constancy and skill one is almost tempted to admire. The day and hour were set when every vase holding water in every house in the City of Cap was to be empoisoned. The hour at which he and his troop were to surprise the whites in the anguish of their death throes was indicated; the captains, lieutenants and sublieutenants were all appointed. He had an accurate list of all the blacks who from that point were to follow him and then fan out across the plain massacring all the whites. He knew the names of all his followers in every work gang. In truth the colony was about to be wiped out when chance alone, a miracle, revealed the plan. During his time as a maroon, he killed perhaps as many blacks as whites—six thousand

in three years according to a 1758 text—proof that these vengeful acts were certainly inspired by the same feelings which ordinarily guided those who committed them. In any case, when finally he was apprehended in 1757, the colony was terrorized and the news of his capture was greeted with universal thanksgiving. . . . For the terror he had caused he was cruelly repaid. By order of the Cap court, 20 January 1758, he was condemned to be burned alive. He had succeeded in persuading the blacks that it would be impossible for the whites to have him killed in case they caught him, and that the Creator would change him on the point of death into a mosquito to reappear more terrible than ever. As chance would have it his neck ring was poorly secured to the stake so that with the first torments the fire brought him he pulled it out. No more was needed to persuade those of his color that the prophecy was fulfilled; so much so that three quarters of the blacks are still steeped in this belief, and are daily expecting to see him return to keep his promises, and that the first black who dares to call himself Macandal can a second time imperil the dependency of Cap.

Nevertheless, after Macandal poisonings continued. A Mr. Rochefort, writing in 1760, reports the following:

On the very same day marked by the wholesale execution of his accomplices a number of Negro cooks poisoned their masters and their friends.<sup>71</sup> At the moment of execution, the poorly secured stake fell and Macandal with it. Immediately there was an every-man-for-himself scramble accompanied by cries of "Macandal is saved!" House doors were banged shut; soon the whole town was in a state of alarm. . . . The sudden deaths attributed to poison did not stop. The Conseil du Cap took preventive measures against the unknown malefactors: on 11 March 1758, prohibiting the making of Macandals or witchcraft items, because of their profaning of holy matters the prohibition against any slave making and distributing *garde-corps* [gris-gris] and macandals is extended to freedmen; slave restrictions against bearing arms, selling provisions, assembling after seven in the evening, even in churches are tightened; freedmen sheltering a maroon were punished with the loss of their freedom including the freedom of family members living with them; finally no freedman black or colored was to wear an *épée* or sword or cutlass in city or town unless they were officers or serving in the constabulary or under service orders. . . . None of these measures proved effective. Poison took its toll as before, that is if all the mysterious deaths of the time are to be attributed to poisoning. It was considered proven that Macandal intended to destroy all the whites. Later on there was agreement that the great cause of the misdeeds attributed to poison was the abuse of authorized colonial customs, whence followed jealousy and an impatience to immediately enjoy advantages stipulated in wills of the masters. . . . It should be noted here that the English colonies suffered a great deal from slave revolts, that the Saint-Domingue slaves were of the same origin and mentality as those in the English colonies, that the Saint-Domingue terrain like that of Jamaica was favorable to insurrections, and even more so, due to the proximity of the Spanish sector. . . .<sup>72</sup>



—A decree by the court at Cap enjoined the freeborn to have the free status of their mothers verified (7 April 1758).

—And by order of the King . . .

All residents are forbidden to allow gatherings and superstitious ceremonies which certain slaves are accustomed to hold at the death of one of them and which they improperly call prayers . . . upon penalty of a fine of three hundred pounds against masters and the whip for slaves. All the King's subjects even if they be not officers are enjoined to close in on these assembled slaves and to take them to prison. . . . Slaves are likewise prohibited from circulating on the main roads or in cities and towns with weighted or knobbed sticks.

#### 1759—*New Precautionary Measures*

Slaves "who, in conformity with a declaration filed by their masters, are to give armed service will do so only in their company and at their side, behind militia companies . . . and in no case are these blacks to form a separate body of troops."<sup>73</sup>

#### 1760—*Poison Still Active*

It is a fact that in Saint-Domingue in 1760—although so great a number of blacks had been put to death that there were planters whose work gangs had almost been decimated—poison still took a severe toll.<sup>74</sup>

#### 1761—*The Clergy against Marronage*

New restrictions decreed on 18 February 1761:

In the larger cities a priest ordinarily called a *curé des nègres* served the spiritual needs of the slaves, though in fact this arrangement existed only in Cap. This priest usually had a very great influence on his flock, who considered themselves to have formed a separate little church, independent of the whites. The negroes' priest was not allowed to baptize and marry slaves on his own. For these, he had to serve in the capacity of an assistant to the priest of the whites, the only priest in charge. His only duties were to catechize the slaves, make them recite the prayers, and preach the word of God to them without fulfilling any priestly function for them. And since the slaves had developed the habit of meeting in the church day and night they had appointed beadles and church wardens among them, dignitaries who passed from one house or plantation to another preaching and catechising, and even, in the absence of the priest, preaching in the church itself. All of these actions were made illegal; in addition it was decreed that the churches would be closed at sundown and from noon to two o'clock.<sup>75</sup>

It is here appropriate to discuss the clergy's position relative to slavery and the efforts of the priests in support of or against marronage. One Saint-

Domingue missionary requested the appointment of a priest to be specifically assigned to Maroons. There were good priests who openly expressed sympathy with the slave's cause. One needs only observe the numerous measures and declarations of the period aimed at curbing or denouncing known complicities by priests favorable to the secret war against slavery. There is a long list of good apostles who, like Father Bouton, a *curé des nègres*, dead of fatigue in 1742, tried to alleviate the slave's suffering, to lighten the weight of his chains. In addition, many later on would associate themselves with rebellions, favor desertions, protect Maroons, spread instruction among the blacks, even serve as active agents, sharing the dangers of armed revolts, like Fathers Phillipe and Bienvenu, like Abbot Sulpice, who, strongly linked with Jean-François and Biassou, had had Mass in all the parishes in revolt for the repose of Boukman's soul;<sup>76</sup> like Abbot Ouyière, whose attachment to rebel bands was well known; like Father de la Hage, "the most ardent apostle of liberty for the blacks,"<sup>77</sup> and the well-known priest from Dondon "arrested at Saint-Raphael and sent to prison in Cap along with his precious company,"<sup>78</sup> toward the close of a career full of adventure and perils.

Because of their repeated efforts to support and strengthen slave desertions, the Jesuits especially merited the colonists' hostility. According to Girod Chantrans, the Jesuits "applied themselves to gaining the negroes' confidence, teaching them to recognize the sublimity of their being, the majesty of man,"<sup>79</sup> and Hilliard d'Auberteuil points out that, "because the Jesuits preached, gathered the blacks together, . . . the colonists blame them for all the pernicious crimes. . . ."<sup>80</sup> Father Cabon confirms that "they were accused by the Procureur Général of teaching false doctrines, of inciting slaves to run away and of being behind the poisonings."<sup>81</sup>

But there were priests who were like the freedmen. If their sympathy for the slave was very often shown, it was expressed only in individual examples and not in a concerted and continued policy of the clergy. Priests and congregations owned slaves, possessed personal and landed property, managed plantations, were large-scale planters and sugar manufacturers, and owned oxcarts or coffee mills. Father Arthaud, formerly priest in Arcahaye and settled in Petit-Goâve,<sup>82</sup> is an example of the latter.

In spite of their pastoral commitments, the Capuchins, Jacobins, Dominicans, and Jesuits were all colonizers and were trapped in the colonial mentality and the dissolution of the cities, in the cupidity and debauchery. Abbot Enos offered for sale "some skilled slaves, one of whom is seven months pregnant."<sup>83</sup> Abbot Castellane was tried in Cap on 19 November 1765 "for having killed a slave on the grounds of his presbytery." A Cayes-Jacmel priest suffered "shameful illnesses resulting from debauches." Numerous priests "bring up little bastards born of their concubines."

It should not be surprising that the colonial authorities utilized religion or rather the dependable influence of the priests over peoples of a mystic or animist mentality to contain the blacks, maintain discipline, and fight against



marronage. As supporters of the regime, it was the task of the priests to defend colonialism and, as a matter of personal interest, to court the confidence of the Africans. It was in the shabbiness of this double standard that most of the priests and missionaries moved. Pamphile de Lacroix writes:

The realization that most of the priests who remained among them (the blacks in revolt) did so only to take advantage of their ignorance, or to channel it at the mercy of a raging fanaticism shrivels the soul with grief. These false apostles clothed in the mentality and the mantle of religion followed the bloody ensign of the first slaves in revolt (that is, the white child they paraded at the tip of a pike) only to remain or to become eligible for an extra salary of which Europe had not the slightest idea. . . . The income of the Saint-Domingue clergy totaled 1,920,000 francs which, divided among forty to fifty eligibles, brought each an income of from thirty to forty thousand francs. There were nevertheless some priests who remained poor. These latter were the real priests whose Christian humility could never court the apostolic prefects. Mr. Malouet observes, and rightly so, that negroes are the most superstitious of humans. Those who have been baptized and frequent the church haven't the slightest notion of religion. They know only the priests and the images; in general they believe them to be a force, a magic virtue. They mix with this belief all the extravagances of idolatrous cults. Neither time nor concern is spared for teaching them and their wretched lives are thus spent in this pitiable debasement. Although they are witnesses to priestly intemperance and the resultant lack of consideration they nevertheless fear and are submissive to them. These observations stamped with genius and truth serve to make more deplorable, more criminal the behavior of the Saint-Domingue priests with respect to the insurrection of the blacks. From the beginning they could have contained it by using their influence and speaking in the name of a God of peace, but they were greedy, and when they saw the wealth of the whites among whom they had no credit melt away they chose to remain with the white butchers in the hope of continuing to profit from their blind ignorance.<sup>84</sup>

In our book *Les marrons du Syllabaire* we drew attention to a "Ruling on the disciplining of negroes addressed to the priests in the French islands of America."<sup>85</sup> The text may have dated from 1776. That it bears "neither date nor signature" is unimportant. In this authentic document Father de Coutances who had spent some twenty years in the islands proposed not to inaugurate but rather to condense a series of current practices selected from colonial ritual, practical use of the sacraments and the threat of hellfire and eternal damnation for the purpose of reducing the slave to complete submissiveness and resignation. This regulation, "in the common interest," was aimed at repressing marronage, poisoning and abortions, the most common forms of slave revolts. In a way, it codified the colonial catechism as it was used. Verification of this lies in the fact that the text of the sermon that the priest in surplice and stole was supposed to read in Creole to the Maroons

"led to the center of the nave and made to kneel" hardly differed, according to Father Gisler, from the argument used to bring back runaway slaves. We cite Father Margât of Cap:

We will content ourselves with exhorting our negroes not to pursue this detestable practice and if one of them has had the misfortune to do so we will try, if he comes to us, to get him back in his master's good graces.

And here is Father Fauque's address to a group of runaways:

Remember my dear children that though you be slaves you are nevertheless Christians like your masters; that from the day of your baptism you profess the same religion as they which teaches you that those who do not live the Christian life shall be cast into hell after death. How unfortunate for you if, after having been slaves to men of this world and time you should become slaves of the devil for all eternity. This misfortune will certainly fall upon you if you do not return to your duty since you are in a condition of habitual damnation for in addition to the wrong you do your masters by depriving them of your labor, you do not come to Mass on holy days; you do not approach the sacraments. . . . Come to me then my dear friends.<sup>86</sup>

In addition, here in Father Coutance's "Ruling on Discipline" is his recommendation for charging Maroons:

Unfaithful and wicked servant, since you have strayed from the service of your master and the obedience you owed to God and the Holy Church in order to give way to the sinfulness of your heart and to expose yourself to the certain loss of your salvation and your life, we, by the authority of our holy ministry, condemn you to serve penance for the period of . . . warning you that should you fail in this and show no clear proof of repentance and making amends you will be rejected among Christians, forbidden entry to the church and abandoned to a death without sacrament, without mourners, and without a burial place.<sup>87</sup>

In 1761 there was a new expedition against Bahoruco.

#### *1764—The Primer Made Illegal; Jesuits Suppressed*

In much of the correspondence concerning the islands, mention is made of the "necessity to keep slaves in a state of deepest ignorance." From this date it is increasingly highlighted that "instruction is incompatible with the existence of the colonies." There is the demand for closing "all schools which blacks and colored people are admitted to," or else the sentiment "that at least it is more prudent not to teach them to read."

—In France a royal edict suppressed the Jesuits, whose missionaries had



already been expelled from Saint-Domingue accused, on 12 November 1764, of "being associated with the slaves."

—The militia, which had been abolished notably to please the poor whites alarmed at seeing colored people armed, was by way of being reestablished around the beginning of the year. An ordinance of 12 November 1764 decreed that the rich pay two hundred francs annually to insure the expenses of a colonial troop.

—In the press with which Saint-Domingue was at last endowed the administrators recommended a section be henceforth devoted to public announcement of runaway slaves and those captured or for sale.

### 1765—*Militia Reinforced*

An ordinance of 15 January 1765 reinforced the militia and announced that "all the colony's free residents over sixteen years of age will constitute the regular and reserve forces for Saint-Domingue (*ban et arrière ban*).<sup>88</sup>" The constabulary is henceforth "divided into thirty-six squads each with a permanent residence."<sup>88</sup>

—Mr. d'Estaing deplored "the frequency of poisoning in the island."<sup>88</sup>

### 1766—*Slave Escapes*

To these elements of disorder [discontent of the whites] are added the heretofore repressed pretensions of some of the freedmen who by their own labor had acquired independence. . . . Even the slaves, especially the creoles were escaping the plantations, taking off to distant areas, bearing arms to simulate being freedmen and living by their wits, ready to serve any cause. Not only the men, but also the women thus took their freedom, the latter finding no difficulty in establishing a new home afar off.<sup>90</sup>

### 1767—*Measures Forbidding the Unauthorized Sale of Arms and Contraband in Africans to Replace Runaways*

An administrators' ordinance prohibited free colored people from buying munitions without permission of the King's Attorney.

One of the reasons for this ordinance was the abuse of munitions made available to all comers, in the sales granted to Maroons by freedmen. The constabulary's archers had been attacked by maroons with firearms; murderous encounters resulted; in the neighboring quarters there was fear of a similar novelty.<sup>91</sup>

For both colonies (the French and the Spanish) marronage continued to be a source of constant embarrassment; in spite of the still frequent poisonings the number of Blacks increases: the 1763 census registered 206,539 slaves; that of 1765, 227,637; that of 1766, 241,497, or an increase of almost 20 percent in four years. This increase is not due entirely to the trade since

in 1765 it was estimated there had been only 10,000 blacks imported and 13,000 in 1766; the figure for the first six months of the following year was 8,290. Many of the new slaves came from Jamaica where marronage raged and the English were reputed to unload on Saint-Domingue individuals who were troublemakers.<sup>92</sup>

### 1770—*Marronage at a Peak*

Following the earthquake that desolated Port-au-Prince on 3 June 1770,

... the number of maroons increased to such proportions that we had the gravest fears for the tranquility of the colony. Security became nonexistent and it was unwise to wander alone in the hills.<sup>93</sup>

### 1771—*The Maroons at Fonds Parisien*

Alarmed at the extent of desertions, the king issued a new ordinance. It asserted that "refusal, because of greed, to provide the slaves their necessities is the cause of marronage."<sup>94</sup>

—Early in 1771, Morne La Selle Maroons "appear close to Fonds Parisien." It became necessary to install a constabulary post there (19 February) because of the increase in plantations.

### 1774—*Maroons at Cul-de-Sac; Fort-Dauphin Ravaged by Noël's Bands*

Maroons reappeared to the north of Plaine du Cul-de-Sac. They were contained by a detachment sent to Grands Bois. Fort-Dauphin was in turn pillaged by the Maroon leader Noël,<sup>95</sup> who was caught, condemned by the court at Cap, and executed.

### 1775—*Brigades for Pursuit of Maroons Increased*

In February the detachments at Croix des Bouquets, Grand Bois, Rocheblanche, and Fonds Parisien had to be strengthened, while Boucan Patate and Boucan Greffin, in the heights of Plaine du Cul-de-Sac, awaited detachments.<sup>96</sup>

### 1776—*Canga and the Candide Brothers*

Noël's depredations in the North were continued by Télémaque Canga in Trou, by Isaac and Pyrrhus Candide in Ecrevisses canton.<sup>97</sup>

Incursions by the Bahoruco maroons again picked up with intensity beginning 1776. During the year a new constabulary post had to be established at Boucan Patate, at a point which until then had been in the Maroons' zone where there are some plantations.<sup>98</sup>



*1777—Black Jacques; Cul-de-Sac Invaded by Maroons*

The hunt for the slave Jacques led to the discovery of a new poison case. A court decree condemned Jacques "who belongs to Mr. Corbières to be burned alive for having been found with a supply of arsenic, and for having poisoned more than one hundred of his master's animals over a period of eight months" [Loix et Constitutions V 805].<sup>99</sup>

—A Supreme Court decree forbade the taking of any blacks or mixed-bloods to France, so as to avoid "their acquiring the idea of independence and equality."<sup>100</sup>

The Treaty of Aranjuez, between France and Spain, provided that Maroons "shall be punctually and faithfully returned upon demand, the price paid to be twelve *piastres gourdes*. Married maroons belong to the masters where they were married. Fugitives from justice will be returned only upon the Governor General's guarantee that they will not be punished for their offense. The two nations agree to pursue Maroons who have withdrawn into the mountains."<sup>101</sup>

Cul-de-Sac was no longer safe against maroon raids. D'Ennery, together with Solano, the Spanish president, organized an expedition into the heart of their retreats to cut them down. The leadership of this hunt was assigned in the king's name to the adjutant from Mirebalais, Saint-Vilmé, who on 27 December 1776 left Croix-des-Bouquets with a detachment of twenty grenadiers, twenty infantrymen from the Port-au-Prince regiment, and 140 militiamen, a much larger force than usual. They made contact with the Maroons on 6 January 1777 without engaging them, for they were holed up in impenetrable jungles, and returned to their departure point completely exhausted. A second expedition one month later was equally fruitless in spite of being reinforced with fifteen grenadiers or infantrymen. This time, the failure was attributed to a water shortage from which the soldiers suffered terribly. On 6 March, for the third time, the column left Port-au-Prince well supplied with rations and water; it returned on the twenty-sixth through Spanish territory, not having sighted the enemy. The caves in which they made their retreats were empty. Finally, in April, a fourth troop of thirty men swept as far as Fonds Parisien without results.<sup>102</sup>

*1778—Maroons Reappear in Boucan Greffin*

Parish priests, notaries, and public officers were enjoined to check the free or slave status of colored people and blacks.

—On 6 May, Maroons reappeared at Boucan Greffin. In November, they returned to the fray. It was decided to establish a guardpost there. Little by little, the defense circle was drawn tighter around the mountains, though giving no hope that the rebels would be effectively contained.<sup>103</sup>

—The king of France recognized the independence of the United States.

On 28 June, the opening of hostilities against England was announced. The news reached Saint-Domingue in August 1778. Colored men volunteered for the campaign in Georgia. Subsequently, several hundred Afro-Americans would enlist and would bring back from the American war a greater self-confidence in the resistance to slavery.

### 1780—*Poisonings; One-Arm Colas*

In the course of a slave trial, the magistrate declared that poisonings committed by slaves had as motive "revenge for the abuse of slaves, especially of the women, by masters and overseers." Fifty-six years after One-Leg Colas, a new Colas appeared, this time One-Arm Colas. The *Affiches Américaines* of 18 January 1780 revealed the marronage of five Negroes as follows:

Blaise, Noelle, Jean-François, creoles, Jean Baptiste suffering a hernia and one Colas à Delaye with one arm cut off; all five have banded together and are causing great disturbances according to reports. Mr. Labbée requests all Residents to please take all measures for apprehending said negroes inasmuch as in a number of sugar mills they have relatives who are heads of the work gang and who could easily prevent their capture. Contact farmer Labbée of Plantation Delaye.

### 1781—*Maroons at Bahoruco*

In March a new and fruitless attack is attempted against the incessant depredations of the Bahoruco Maroons.

### 1783—"A Powder Barrel"

Mr. de Rouvray, brigadier in the king's armies and Saint-Domingue proprietor, confessed that: "a slave colony is a city under threat of assault; the people live atop a powder keg."<sup>104</sup>

### 1784—*Deaths and Desertions*

The Royal Ordinance of 3 December 1784 made it illegal to subject a slave to more than fifty lashes of the whip, "to beat them with sticks, mutilate or kill them by whatever means." The administration attempted to halt desertions by easing the slave's lot and by restricting the permitted cruelties. The ordinance made clear its fear "of insubordination and desertion in slave gangs."

In October of the same year, because of the manpower shortage caused by deaths and desertions, a special bonus of 100 pounds was granted for each slave brought into the southern sector.



*1785—Santiago; Phillipe; Kébinda—Story of the Bahoruco Rebellion*

The third cause for celebrity is the eighty-five-year sojourn of the maroons in the Bahoruco or Béate Mountains and the surrounding areas which were the theater of their cruel plundering, and which they regarded as their personal domain. In May 1702, Mr. de Gallifet had these blacks pursued by fifteen men who were sixty-eight days in the woods, sometimes not finding water for four or five days. They killed three blacks, captured eleven; some thirty escaped; their provisions and farms were destroyed. Again, on 25 October 1715, orders had to be issued to expel them, and Mr. Dukors, commandant at Cul-de-Sac, did so in 1817. In their area he found a forty-foot well. They again appeared in 1719, at which time their leader, Michel, was captured.

In 1728 Charles Baudouin, later commandant of the Jacmel militia, moved against them with a number of local people and took forty-six prisoners. In 1733, thirty-two were captured. In 1740 they went to Grand Bois du Mirebalais, whence Mister Marillet, assistant provost marshal of the Cul-de-Sac Constabulary, set out with twenty-two archers to attack them. They killed seven and captured fourteen, all of whom had been born in the woods, and from whom they learned that twenty-three had escaped. In 1742, they again appeared at Anses-à-Pitres. The people of Jacmel marched against them and wiped out a large number. These negroes then moved to another location; when they had sufficiently increased their numbers, they again took up their incursions, using steel and fire and kidnapping blacks. Mr. Baudouin Desmarattes, son-in-law to Mr. Marillet, sought them out and captured twelve.

In December 1761 there was yet another expedition. Safe behind breastworks, the blacks danced their defiance of their adversaries. The latter, furious, jumped into ditches, the bottoms of which were studded with sharpened pine branches and the tops overgrown with brambles and vines; fourteen mulattoes, almost half the attacking force, were crippled. Many blacks were killed, and others were taken with their arrows and firearms. During Mr. Belzunce's tenure as general, the leader of the negroes took his name and renewed their depredations, which seemed to have slackened when, in 1776, Mr. d'Ennery was obliged to establish a post at Boucan-Patate, which the blacks attacked while the guardhouse was being constructed, and another near the dry bed of the Anse-à-Pitres River. In spite of this, from Grands-Bois and Fond-Parisien, as far as Sale-Trou, they ventured forth to assassinate, to pillage, and to kidnap negroes. In addition, on 17 August, they killed a plantation manager.

The heads of the two colonies then agreed upon a joint pursuit. Mr. de Saint-Vilmé, the king's adjutant at Mirebalais, arrived at Croix-des-Bouquets on 27 December 1776, with a detachment of twenty grenadiers and twenty infantrymen from the Port-au-Prince regiment. Colored militiamen from the Cul-de-Sac and Port-au-Prince parishes combined to comprise 180 men with the addition of those from Mirebalais camped at Grands-Bois and those marching from Jacmel. Mr. Saint-Vilmé located the blacks' position at Bahoruco and attacked on 6 January 1777, but, the dogs having barked

the night before, the negroes moved quickly into the woods, which were so thick that the troops could not penetrate. Prostrated with fatigue, the detachment, some of whom had been reduced to drinking their urine, withdrew in order to obtain provisions. More than thirty mulattoes deserted, and a delay was necessary pending the dispatch of fifteen more grenadiers or riflemen.

A month's rations were moved up. Then Saint-Vilmé again advanced, only to find not a single Maroon. A Spaniard offered to guide Saint-Vilmé to the caves, to which the negroes had had to retire. Since he had said that for five or six days there would be no available water, tin containers holding six pints of water were provided from Port-au-Prince, along with an additional twenty-five men from the Port-au-Prince regiment. At Cayes, a month's provisions for one hundred men were loaded on boat and sent to Béate. When these were delivered the troops resumed their advance; it was then 6 March. They arrived at the caves, but the negroes had just abandoned them. Then they went on into Spanish territory, whence the detachment, some eighty regimentals, returned to Port-au-Prince on 26 March.

This expedition cost eighty thousand pounds, and over a period of three months, the residents of Port-au-Prince supplied fifty slaves and forty mules for transporting provisions. From the beginning of April, the maroons moved rapidly into Fond-Parisien. Thirty infantrymen of the Port-au-Prince regiment were sent there under the orders of Mr. de Coderc. On 6 May 1777 they began ravaging Boucan-Greffin. They reappeared there on 29 November 1778, sacked Mr. Coupé's place, and took away his housekeeper. This black woman, Anne, was tied, gagged and dragged away by force when she refused to follow the maroons. They returned in two days' march. Kébinda, the creole leader born in the woods, gave Anne to his servant as his concubine. When she resisted, the leader took her for himself; still she resisted. She was caught trying to escape, and when she was unanimously condemned to death, the leader opposed the verdict. Finally, softened by a passion heightened by her continued rejection, Kébinda, after a period of four months, allowed himself to be persuaded by Anne that she would become his bride if he married her in church. One night he left with her, and they arrived at the guardhouse on the Spanish border, where Anne, crying out, had him arrested. She was returned to Mr. Coupé, and the government gave her her freedom under the name Anne Fidèle [Faithful Anne].

Although Kébinda was released by the Spaniards, he died shortly afterwards from the effects of a heart betrayed.

In 1779, 1780, and 1781, the blacks continued their disturbances. There was even an expedition against those of Jacmel at the end of March 1781, unsuccessful because the lack of water at Anses-à-Pitre forced the detachment to turn back. In October, new crimes required sending a regiment and some men from Port-au-Prince to Grand-Bois and a like amount to Fond-Verrettes, and twenty colored men of good will, at thirty *sous* a day, to a plot of land of Mme. de Liliancourt's. Finally, in 1782, Mr. de Saint-Lary, a former surveyor and militia lieutenant, established since 1779 in Anse-à-Pitre where, far from any French dwelling and rather close to the poorly policed Spanish sector, it was necessary to be always on the alert, sought to



contact any of the latter who had had dealings with the Maroons. In this he was successful, and, becoming friendly with them he confided to Diègue Félis, a free Spanish quadroon, a plan to get the blacks to turn themselves in and to form a clan under an agreement with the government. He also discussed this with Antonio Félis, another free quadroon, and with Jean Lopez and Simon Silvère, both Spaniards and frontier maroons. The blacks responded favorably. Mr. de Saint-Lary notified P. Darvé, the king's adjutant for Jacmel, and Mr. de Vincent, second in command at Port-au-Prince. They advised him to continue the parleys. Mr. de Saint-Lary then had Diego Félis pass on some gifts to the blacks and tell them that if a dozen of them would come to Plaine du Trou-Jacob, five leagues from his place, he would come alone by sea.

On the day indicated, fourteen Africans each wearing only loincloth and leather cartridge box, carrying firearms and machetes, approached from one side with Diègue Félis, and from the other side, came Messrs. Lopez and Silvère, both in uniform. Their leaders, Santyague, a Spanish black born in Banique and picked up by the maroons forty-five years ago, and Philippe, born in the woods, agreed that they would withdraw to Neybe Parish, where they would be directed by three or four Spaniards, and that after a year they would all seek baptism in Neybe, prior to proceeding to their assigned area. Santyague indicated the number of Africans by counting out 137 kernels of corn; and, after distributing gifts of fabric and kerchiefs, Mr. de Saint-Lary promised to return in two months. The administrators, to whom Mr. de Saint-Lary reported this development, sent his account to the Port-au-Prince Chamber of Agriculture. At the same time, Diègue Félis came to Mr. Baudouin Desmarattes, saying that the negroes who intended to come in wanted to see his son. The latter left on 8 April and arrived at Cap Mongon on the fifteenth, guided through the woods by Diègue Félis. They arrived at Nissao Point at 5:00 P.M. on the seventeenth. Diègue discharged a rifle shot, and two hours later thirty-two armed Africans arrived. They parleyed until the nineteenth; then the blacks escorted young Desmarattes to his boat.

Informed of this latest representation by the blacks who were demanding freedom and asylum, the administrators wrote to support them in their demand. Consulted as I indicated above, the Port-au-Prince Chamber of Agriculture decided on 2 May 1783 that these Africans ought to be given their freedom and welcomed, provided that they settled in the French sector. However, negotiations were not brought to term, and one of the leaders came with two of his men to Mr. Desmarattes in September 1784 to make known their impatience. In February 1785 Mr. de Bellecombe sent word to Diègue Félis to bring two of the leaders to Mr. Desmarattes, who then sent them to Port-au-Prince accompanied by his son. Acting in concert with the president of the Spanish sector, the government appointed Mr. Jean-Marie Desmarattes, Jr., to carry out the final arrangements. On 4 May, Don Isidro de Peralta declared free those Spanish fugitives who would consent to come to live in the place designated for them, and, as his representative, named Don Louis de Chavez y Mendoza dean of the Royal Audiencia of Santo Domingo.

The two commissioners went to the Bahoruco Mountains and settled everything, submitting an official report at Neybe on 28 May. The blacks numbered 130, of whom 125 were either French or French descendants. It was agreed that although their chief, Santyague, was Spanish, he would return with the 125 to French soil, that all their developments would be destroyed. These blacks promised to pursue and to arrest maroons of both nations, at twelve gourdes each, according to the French-Spanish Treaty of 3 June 1777.

On 12 June, the two administrators of the colony ratified the agreement, decreed pardon and liberty for these blacks and a grant of eight months' provisions to carry them until the land to be accorded them could produce a harvest. On 11 December 1785, a letter from the minister approved the operation noting, however, that an early peace was desired. But, in February 1786, the blacks rejected the proposition of the French and Spanish commissioners that they report to the area where they were expected, and it is believed that behind this development were a few Spaniards who habitually got their game and fish at practically no cost. A number of them had already come to Neybe to be baptized. The blacks had since, as agreed, kept their promise to put an end to raiding; but their proximity still frightened the planters away, and constabulary posts were reestablished.

These are the factual details about these individuals who, for some time, laid waste a vast stretch of the countryside and among whom there were men sixty years old who "have never lived elsewhere than in these forests where they were born." The latter are by nature mistrustful, and it is clearly evident on their faces; fear moves them all. A whole volume could be written on what was said about their numbers and way of life. Through fear, their numbers were placed at eighteen hundred. Their real hideout is near Nisao in the mountains north of Azua, and it was there they retreated when they had to flee the Bahoruco Mountains, where they joined forces for raids and were easily able to subsist on wild animals. Their outposts are ajoupas manned by two men who withdraw to another ajoupa and thus successively to the main body of troops. Their many sentinels are dogs, and there are Spaniards who even go into the French sector to buy them arms and ammunition. They engaged in pillaging and, if necessary, would reconnoiter at length to determine the propitious moment. Cruel when they wished to intimidate or to avenge themselves, they carried off other blacks, whom they made veritable slaves. They accepted those who came to them voluntarily only after making certain they were not spies, and upon the slightest doubt had them put to death. One needs but cite the example of a mulatto woman of Mr. Fouquet's living in Cul-de-Sac who managed to escape from them.

After Mr. de Saint-Vilmé's expedition, these blacks, who moved about in fear of being surprised, were sometimes forced to live on leaves and wild fruits. The resultant severe dysentery and subsequent small pox carried off many of them. They even thought of turning themselves in, but Santyague, who had lived among them for some fifty years, dissuaded them. Taking advantage of their superstition, he assumed the role of father and directed them. He taught them to pray in Spanish and, in his hands, a rosary and a small cross were the arms with which he soon overwhelmed their minds.



Who would have thought that this domination would persist so long as it has? Who would dare to contend that some successor to Santyague would not be more formidable than he? The government therefore should be determined to destroy this people if need be once and for all. But then it would have to be kept in mind that, whenever pursuit was discontinued, they grew in numbers. Troops regularly supplied with provisions and munitions would, unless confidence deserted them, certainly triumph over other forces lacking their fine advantages and whose wounded, for lack of aid, were condemned to death by the very climate. . . .<sup>105</sup>

Nevertheless, the Bahoruco Rebellion was not ended. Up until Independence, other leaders and other bands continued to establish formidable camps in the area. One cannot forget either Mamzelle, who became more and more aggressive in 1793, or the intractable Lamour Dérance who in the Maniel hills was still, in 1803, defying the two thousand troops of the French general Kerseveau. Wearing a belt of sheep-knuckle bones which protected him against bullets, he lived among a group of veteran Maroons, growing "immense fields of banana trees, yams and potatoes." In 1810 the community was commanded by Lafortune. In 1860 Maroons\* were still being hunted in Bahoruco.

#### *Report and Verification of Maroons Established in the Neybe Mountains*

We, Don Louis de Chavez y Mendoza, Dean of the Santo-Domingo Court and Jean-Marie Desmarattes, Dragoon Captain of the Saint-Domingue National Troops desirous of carrying out as fully as possible the orders given to us respectively by their Excellencies M. Guillaume Léonard de Bellecombe, Great-Cross of the Royal and Military Order of St. Louis, Brigadier in the King's Army, Governor-General of the French Part of this Island; and Don Isidro de Peralta y Rosas Brigadier in the Armies of the King of Spain, Governor of the Spanish Part of the Island of Saint-Domingue, for the purpose of determining the number of Maroons in the Bahoruco mountains, dependency of Neybe, and the numbers of those belonging respectively to the two governments either because they had belonged to French or Spanish masters, or were descendants of slave parents of one or the other nation, and whom pursuant to the Project of Their Excellencies the respective Governors must return to the Sector whence they came, thence to enjoy civil status and to be trusted as other freedmen in consequence of the pardon granted them, we went first to Neybe where after having initially picked up the necessary information by questioning several of the Maroon Chiefs who earlier had been employed to persuade others to subject themselves to the sovereignty of the two Governors, we had ourselves taken to their area and as noted hereafter proceeded to verify the total number of maroons as being One Hundred and Thirty. We found only two from the Spanish creole sector of Banica to wit Julien, Dutch, age thirty, no wife nor children nor plantation and the said Santiague about fifty, married

\*That is, rebels hostile to the Haitian regime of the time.

to one Ignace a mountain creole of about thirty with three children namely Marie, age fifteen, Jean, seven and Domenga, eight months, a family of five in addition to which Santiago has two fields planted in rice, corn, plantains, cane and other provisions. By their own version or according to their spokesmen the others listed below all belong to the French Part, as follows: Boiro and his wife both sixty, both mountain creoles. Three fields planted in rice, corn, plantains, cane and other provisions. André, etc. . . .

Following the list, the text resumes:

This verification made in the best of faith and according to our above ranks as Commissioners of the two Governors was signed by us to provide all necessary sanction and thrust so that it may be appended to the Agreements relative to the return of said maroons into the Territory of each of the powers to which they once belonged.

Made in duplicate in French and Spanish . . .

### *Ratification*

The above official report signed by us, Brigadier in the King's Army, Grand Cross of the Military and Royal Order of Saint-Louis, Governor General of the French Leeward Islands in America. . . . It is further agreed that the best interest of both governments require that the said St. Yago originally from the Spanish Sector and married to a fugitive black woman from the French area should remain with the negroes to be located on the territory of His Most Catholic Majesty; he will be exchanged for a black woman who will be sent to the Spanish Sector, or else compensation will be arranged and paid according to the Treaty. So that the said Agreement might provide both Governments every advantage we both intended we stipulate and promise in good faith that upon demand by either of us, he shall be permitted to make the rounds of the respective possessions for which the above pardoned blacks will supply the men to pursue and arrest maroons of either nation who will be turned over respectively upon the new owner's paying the captors the sum fixed by the Police Treaty between the two nations and further that since the former settlements of the above blacks could be a temptation to other slaves to abandon their masters to withdraw thereto and form a new clan of brigands, these developments are to be completely destroyed and with the consent of the Spanish Governor detachments of the same blacks will make frequent area inspections so that no camp may be set up there.

Duplicate copy of this Agreement in French and Spanish is provided for possession and deposit in the archives of the two Governments from the date of execution.

### *Act of Pardon for the Maroons in the Neybe Mountains*

The black maroons holed up in the Neybe Mountains having expressed a great desire to obtain Pardon for their desertion and to return under French authority and live under the protection of the Legal Authority of The



Nation and to enjoy the same civil status enjoyed by the other Freedmen, We, Governor General and Intendant of the French Leeward Islands of America; Considering the advantages to be derived from the return of the said blacks to Government subjection and especially to service to which they can be put in pursuing and arresting blacks who in the future might try to withdraw into the mountains they previously occupied. By these presents we have and do grant them general Amnesty for their desertion and that of their Relatives included in the verification Minutes signed on French soil.

On the designated lands to be given them along the Sale-Trou River each head of family will personally be given a free paper covering himself and all his family, and likewise each unmarried black mentioned in the above report; and in order to facilitate their return to French rule and to ease the means of their cultivating the land to be given them and to provide them an assured existence until their Plantations can sustain them, they will be given eight months provisions which they will pick up in Jacmel from the Commandant of Saltrou who will give them the necessary Passports.

The present act of Pardon shall be registered with the Government Record Office for reference as needed. Done at Port-au-Prince under the seal of our arms and the countersign of our Secretaries 12 June 1785.

Signed Bellecombe and Bongars

By General Sentour.

By the Intendant.

Signed Hébert

The administrators then fixed at from ten to twelve carreaux the land to be granted each family (15 September 1785).<sup>106</sup>

—In that same year, Julien Raymond addressed his first statements to Marshall de Castries, claiming equality for freedmen. Not without some anxiety, Morange of the Foâche household notes that

assassinations by blacks are becoming more frequent. Three whites have just been murdered aboard a schooner. Yesterday a new black felled a youth of sixteen with blows of a coffee beater. Today another turned against a guard after having knifed a white. The Béhotte heirs had their jail torn down in the aided escape of a black wearing leg irons and an iron collar. . . . Daily the maroons increase in number, their boldness even more.<sup>107</sup>

### 1786—*Jérôme Called Poteau Preaches Independence*

Surely it can be no surprise discovery that Marmelade was the target area for spreading the doctrine of mesmerism, shaped, as in Europe, according to the view of the propagators. These ideas arrived in Marmelade along with the forces of the Illuminants,\* and the disgusting scenes and profane

\* They claimed to have celestial visions. The modern term is "Illuminati."

abuses of the Convulsionnaires.\* Swindling was the motive. By a decree of 16 May 1786, the Superior Court of Cap had in vain threatened the followers of this dangerous doctrine; one Jerome called Poteau, a mulatto, assisted by the black Télémaque, nevertheless continued to ransom slaves by initiating them in chimeric mysteries during night assemblies held in distant locales and attracting immense crowds of these weak-minded, superstitious men. Superior to them by virtue of their great credulity, Jerome sold them *maman-bila* (little limestones) in sacks called *fonda*; black and red seeds from a type of acacia, which he called *poto*; and especially sticks called *mayombo*, into which *maman-bila* powder was poured through a drilled hole; this gave them the advantage over some other black whose stick was not thus weighted. Jerome charged only one gourde for a *poto*, but a *mayombo* cost four gourdes. He had assistants who gave instructions on their own, turning over half their take to him and all preaching independence. By a decree of the Saint-Domingue Court dated 13 November 1787, Jérôme was condemned to the galleys for life. It was felt that his disciple Télémaque would be sufficiently punished by placing him next to Jérôme while, wearing an iron collar, he was exhibited in the Clugny marketplace in Cap; and that further this would demonstrate the ineffectiveness of these practices in providing escape from the penalties which in justice brazen charlatanism ought always to suffer.<sup>108</sup>

The magistrate who wrote these lines did not perceive that these superstitious practices inspired by exposure to mesmerism went far beyond the boundaries of what was considered to be the very limited mental capacity of the slaves. Or, perhaps, he did not care to perceive that they had come to form a concept of independence, perhaps collective, for the race as a whole.<sup>109</sup>

In 1786, Gressier de la Jaloussière, from Marmelade, revealed there were frequent meetings of some two hundred slaves in Corail (a dependency of Marmelade) held "in slave houses on banana plantations and other secluded areas, always at night," where they were instructed by the mulatto Jerome, who preached independence, at the same time distributing weighted sticks and cabalistic objects. The publication of this document is accompanied by the following commentary: "A great deal has been said of slave superstitions and of their secret organizations and the scheming and crimes for which they provided pretext (poisoning, infanticide, etc.) but this has been for the most part only hearsay since whites were not admitted to these secret meetings and legal documentation was usually held secret or destroyed. . . ." The existence of a considerable undercurrent of such exhortations and intrigues has been suspected, but it would be interesting to search out and discover them, from the time of the first maroons up to the Revolution; might Polydor and Macandal have been precursors to Boukman and Romaine la Prophétesse? Were they in a line of succession? Surely, the answers to this question would explain many things.<sup>10</sup>

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\* These were fanatics who experienced or pretended to experience nervous convulsions before the tomb of the Paris deacon.



*1787—Yaya Lays Waste Two Parishes*

Gilot, the Maroon nicknamed Yaya, a plunderer in the parishes of Trou and Terrier Rouge, was arrested and condemned to death in September 1787. Saint-Méry accused him of having been "a bloody brigand."

*1788—More Poison*

In a 1788 memorandum by Nicolas le Jeune, this notoriously cruel colonist revealed that

His father had lost through poisoning four hundred slaves in twenty-five years and fifty-two in just six months and that in less than two years he had lost forty-seven blacks and thirty mules.<sup>111</sup>

*1789—Increasingly the Africans Talk about Liberty*

The colored men claimed their rights. Disunited, the colonials demanded political autonomy and the right to manage Saint-Domingue as they saw fit. There was a general malaise. Under cover of these troubles the slaves continued their move. From a host of slave night meetings in the woods, ideas about liberty were widely disseminated. Maroon groups headed by leaders became more numerous. Already the most daring of these chieftains were preparing the revolution and were known by name: Hyacinthe, Halaou, Caïman, Lamour Dérance, Armand Bérault, Martial Lemerle, Candi, Pierrot, Macaya, Pierre Michel, Dieudonné, Lafortune, Pompée, Romaine La Prophétesse, Barthélémy, Lafrance, Laplume.

These Maroon bands were reported at Arcahaie, Cul-de-Sac, Léogâne and at Jacmel, at Trou Caïman, la Motte, and Plymouth. From 1786 Voodoo continued to be the Maroons' most effective arm for increasing desertions and the struggle against slavery. Still another greatly alarmed colonist wrote:

Everybody has resolved to keep armed at home and to join in patrolling the roads and large savannas. These precautions seem to hold off the blacks, but there is a work slowdown and clearly something is hatching that will break out in a plantation mutiny: this will be the signal to all the others.<sup>112</sup>

Roger Massio reported the other contemporary account:

At present we are most preoccupied with the threats of a revolt . . . our slaves have already formed mobs in one part of the colony, threatening to destroy every white and to take over the Island . . . we are most always under arms . . . evenings between nine and ten we are all to horse and armed with gun and bayonet, cartridge pouch with twenty to thirty cartridges, saber and pistol; we take off after assembly to patrol in every direction to prevent blacks from assembling, and we visit every plantation to

search every slave hut to see if they are armed and we seize all machetes and arms. . . .<sup>113</sup>

### 1790—Ogé and Chavannes

The freedmen, arms in hand, claim their rights. The revolt is put down by fifteen hundred soldiers. Ogé and Chavannes, martyrs of the freedmen's struggle for equality, were executed. Though this uprising had no interest for the slaves, it did, however, highlight the unrest and increase a state of almost insupportable tension. As is known, the Freedmen's Revolt, even if it remained the most courageous and determined phase of the battles for equality, was to fail in a setback resulting from the egoism of their objectives. The blacks were happy about this new breach that shook the colonial regime, thus serving the cause of liberty. The repercussions of the Ogé-Chavannes revolt were a new factor in the general unrest. Henceforth, anxious to carve out a similar path, the slaves would give effective if not enthusiastic support instead of the reported abstention held to in spite of overtures by the freedmen. Actually 250 slaves had responded to the call, but had been rejected by Ogé, who disagreed with Chavannes on the value of this assistance. Whatever the case, during the Ogé affair, blacks in the same aggressive spirit held assemblies in Plaine des Cayes and on the Fabre plantation in Port-Salut.

### 1791—Boukman Organizes the General Slave Revolt in the North

The slaves revolted in Cul-de-Sac, Croix des Bouquets, and Port-au-Prince in support of the freedmen. Together, in a battle on the Plantation Peinier, they routed the whites. They would be among the 243-300 blacks and twenty-three mulatto slaves rewarded by being drowned under cover of night in the Môle Saint-Nicolas roadstead, a horrible crime. The freedmen were accused of complicity in this shameful massacre along with the whites with whom from then on they allied themselves, at least within the fragile framework of the Concordats. The situation developed remarkably. In a variety of ways the agitation reached the southern and western parishes. People in the North lived in great anxiety. At Limbé, especially, the revolt rumbled. It was a powder barrel ready to explode at the first spark. It was then that the Maroon leader Boukman Dutty<sup>114</sup> made his appearance. He had come from Jamaica, having been sold in contraband by an English slaver. He was equally endowed with courage, boldness, and physical strength. In addition to an already imposing stature and power of domination this colossus wielded the power conferred on him by the halo of Voodoo priesthood. He had long studied colonial life and had risen to the position of driver, then coachman at Plantation Clément. His incessant traveling about as coachman doubtlessly enabled him to establish a network of contacts in the various work gangs and frequent communications with slaves and commanders on neighboring plantations.



Contemporary documents shedding light on Boukman's extraordinary personality are few. Little is known about his slave life. Was he with another Saint-Domingue master before coming to Mr. Clément's work gang? Was he the giant, as always depicted in the one and only version repeated over and over again? These questions come to mind upon reading the following runaway slave notice in the *Affiches Américaines* of 5 October 1779. It is one of the rare times that a Maroon was designated by the name *Bouquemen*. Other details, his experience with arms, his fierce demeanor, his character as "a dangerous subject whom it is important to arrest" all suggest this could have been Boukman in his long-ago first days as a Maroon:

Runaway slaves: Three blacks named Bouquemen, a hunter, Jean-Jacques a creole coachman unbranded, and David a Guinea Negro branded X, have gone maroon from the plantation of Mr. Cailleau the elder and Mme. the Widow Dorlic at Maribaroux, the first two forty and forty-two years old are most dangerous and important to arrest, the first is five feet three, round-faced with small eyes and a fierce aspect, the coachman is five feet four, deep eyes, wide nostrils. . . . This latter escaped with a dwarf, a chain and some thumbscrews. If found please have them arrested and taken to the nearest jail under all possible security and notify Mr. Dorlic at Maribaroux.

Was this Bouquemen recaptured and sold to another owner, perhaps Mr. Clément? In any case we note that Mr. Dorlic did not continue the search for him. For in the 13 March *Gazette* of 1781 this same colonist mentioned only the slave Jean-Jacques, whose physical description he repeated, mentioning him as "a very dangerous subject at whatever plantation he frequents, he has been especially helped by the Maribaroux blacks; escaped almost ten months ago, it is important to all that he be picked up." The name Boukman (Toussaint-Louverture also writes it as Bouquemen) is linked to the ceremony at Bois Caïman where, under the Voodoo sign, the sacred Pact of the General Slave Revolt was sealed. The best invocation of this ceremony is the one taught many of us at our school benches<sup>115</sup> and completed by Pauléus Sannon:<sup>116</sup>

He exercised over all the slaves who came near him an inexplicable influence. In order to wash away all hesitation and to secure absolute devotion he brought together on the night of 14 August 1791 a great number of slaves in a glade in Bois Caïman near Morne-Rouge.<sup>117</sup> They were all assembled when a storm broke. Jagged lightning in blinding flashes illuminated a sky of low and somber clouds. In seconds a torrential rain floods the soil while under repeated assaults by a furious wind the forest trees twist and weep and their largest branches, violently ripped off, fall noisily away. In the center of this impressive setting those present, transfixed, gripped by an inspired dread see an old dark woman arise. Her body quivers in lengthy spasms; she sings, pirouettes and brandishes a large cutlass overhead. An even greater immobility, the shallow scarcely audible breathing, the

burning eyes fixed on the black woman soon indicate that the spectators are spellbound. Then a black pig is brought forward, its squeals lost in the raging of the storm. With a swift stroke the inspired priestess plunges her cutlass into the animal's throat. . . . The hot, spurting blood is caught and passed around among the slaves; they all sip of it, all swearing to carry out Boukman's orders. The old woman of the strange eyes and shaggy hair invokes the gods of the ancestors while chanting mysterious words in African dialect. Suddenly Boukman stands up and in an inspired voice cries out, "God who made the sun that shines on us from above, who makes the sea to rage and the thunder roll, this same great God from his hiding place on a cloud, hear me, all of you, is looking down upon us. He sees what the whites are doing. The God of the whites asks for crime; ours desires only blessings. But this God who is so good directs you to vengeance! He will direct our arms, he will help us. Cast aside the image of the God of the whites who thirsts for our tears and pay heed to the voice of liberty speaking to our hearts. . . ." (Translation from the much more moving Creole text)<sup>118</sup>

The night of 16 August, Plantation Chabaud burned. The slave Desgrieux, a driver, was arrested and declared that "all the drivers, coachmen, domestics and trusted slaves of neighboring plantations and adjacent districts have conspired to burn the plantations and kill the whites." Some leaders were arrested at the Flaville and Desgrieux plantations, and the slave Paul was taken at Plantation Bfin. On the night of 21 August 1791 upon the agreed signal, the slaves on plantations Noé, Clément, Flaville, Gallifet, and Turpin revolted and moved on to Limbé. Acul was in flames. Limbé was a heap of ruins. La Plaine du Nord, Petite Anse, Quartier Morin and Limonade were ravaged, and shortly afterwards it was the turn of Grande Rivière, Saint-Suzanne, Dondon, Marmelade, Plaisance and Port-Margot. Two hundred sugar and eighteen hundred coffee mills were destroyed. A thousand whites were strangled. The northern parishes were

. . . a spectacle of indescribable horror. Everything is aflame. Rising to dizzy heights, enormous smoke spirals obscure the entire horizon. According to the intermittent action of the winds the dark columns twist and lower only to climb again even higher at intervals allowing the reddening glare of the devastating flames to break through. Dismayed and stunned we watch from Cap the ravages of the disaster. Under a low sky dark and enflamed, night and day are confounded. A veritable rain of fire, caused by an avalanche of kindled straw torn from the canefields and of all sorts of small things, from sparkling debris borne on the air, falls upon the city, even on ships in the roads. . . .<sup>119</sup>

For two months the slaves grouped in small bands continued their incursions, massacres and burnings, returning at night to the mountain summits, keeping on the alert and decimating the colonial forces. In November 1791 Boukman, the leader of the revolt, was killed by a shot from the pistol of an



officer, Mr. Michel. Here is the true account of Boukman's death as it was told, without embellishment by the colonel of the Cap Regiment:<sup>120</sup>

End of Mr. de Cambefort's correspondence with Mr. Blanchelande during his campaign in Plaine de l'Acul.

7 November 1791

I continued to charge the rebels on the road and in the canefields and, with my cavalry, captured two of their cannon and a white man who was operating them. Having been shown an entrance gate to a canefield, I went in quickly accompanied by your nephew, Mr. Simon, and some twenty dragoons, all of us belly to ground: With firearms and sabers we killed about thirty, among them Boukman; he was carrying a double-barreled gun which he discharged at me and Mr. Dubuisson. It was Mr. Michel, an officer of exceptional valor who killed him with a pistol shot. I myself killed two of them. Boukman's gun belonged to his late master, Mr. Clément, whom he had murdered. He was also carrying a brace of excellent pistols. The brigands were completely routed, and I believe that a very great number of them were killed. After advancing as far as the Duthil plantation, I captured another cannon, a piece of eight, and a mortar, twenty pounds of powder, and a quantity of bullets. Finally, night falling, I pulled in my forces and returned to camp around seven o'clock. In this action our casualties were only one man killed and three wounded. One cannot overemphasize the advantage gained by our having killed Boukman. The event has caused such a great sensation in camp (where there had been some concern for me when I opened the attack on the brigands) that my section was moved to an excess of joy and extravagant homage to me, all of which I could not have expected. It was quite apparent that Boukman was the leader who had the greatest influence over the minds of the blacks; it is my fervent hope that he will not be replaceable. It is equally clear he had planned to attack my camp last night with a large force and his five cannon; he would not have taken us but he could have severely damaged us. My victory yesterday led me to feel that Coupe-à-David lost with Boukman all of its strength. This consideration with that of troop fatigue did not at all outweigh the commitment I had made with Mr. Drosain to attack this cut. At daybreak today I carried out my plan of attack, setting up with 160 men three ambush points past which the brigands would have to make their retreat, and sending a column around the flanks of *La Coupe*, one by the Dupathy road, the other by the Flaiville road, emplacing two cannon brought up by the cavalry on the main road at the end of *La Coupe*. The result of my sortie was the capture of this bandit, a most interesting chieftain in terms of the way he talks about their operation. All of what they considered to be their fighting force had come down yesterday to attack us, and considering they were defeated it is not very surprising that I found the post almost abandoned. They had removed the cannon prior to yesterday. I destroyed all their ajoupas and the slave housing on neighboring plantations; then I moved on the Hourquebie, Balanson, Desmangles and Capdeville plantations where they had encampments: I routed them and burned their hideouts. Scarcely was I atop Coupe-

à-David than some free colored women and a great number of slave women came forward seeking my protection. I collected 114 of them whom I had taken to my camp by way of Coupe.

P.S. I forgot to tell you about a valiant mulatto who was always at Boukman's side; he fought like a lion against three of my dragoons before succumbing.<sup>121</sup>

Boukman's head, along with a placard stating "The head of Boukman, leader of the rebels," was exhibited on a public square in Cap. According to a witness, "never did a death head conserve so much expression. The open, still-glistening eyes seemed to be giving his troops the signal for a massacre."<sup>122</sup>

With Boukman dead, new leaders, who previously had shared with him the organization of the general revolt, emerged from the resistance. Again in November, all Plaine du Cul-de-Sac was in arms, and the freedmen were laying siege to Port-au-Prince. The South, also, had risen, and, in the North, where, as from some great furnace, the reddening flames still rose and were reflected on clouds as far away as the Bermudas, the terror was far from abatement. "At the crackling sounds of woods aflame, and with the raucous, prolonged tones of the sad-sounding lambis," the anxiety increased. At Cap, fifteen hangmen and three gibbets were kept constantly busy. Hundreds of slaves and freedmen were massacred before the colonists could pull themselves together and organize the struggle.

It was known that colored men were joined with the rebels and that Spaniards were secretly assisting by supplying them arms and munitions. The blacks still held the countryside, and it appeared that, despite combat losses, they were increasing in numbers. Gradually they acquired military skills and the rudiments of tactics. At first they were so ignorant they did not know how to use the cannon they captured, and loaded them by putting the cannonball in the far end of the piece and then the powder. . . . In order to get provisions and munitions the insurgents turned over to the Spaniards the furniture pillaged from plantations, animals they appropriated and sold, and black children snatched from the plantations. On both sides the war became atrocious. The insurrection did not lose ground. Over and over again pushed back to the hills, the Negroes always returned to the plain. De Blanchelande determined to take the offensive. . . . Plaisance Parish was swept away, and Acul was taken. Colonel Touzard debarked at Port Margot and recaptured Limbé.<sup>123</sup>

In November, Toussaint-Louverture, who had worked in the background as an organizer of the revolt, entered the scene and joined with Jean-François and Jeannot, chiefs in Biassou's band. Soon, by virtue of his genius, he would surge to the fore and, alone, would assume the overall direction of the revolt, now the real Revolution of Saint-Domingue. Even prior to opening up on the great revolt, the year 1791 had been crammed with events. In February



there had been the torture and execution of Ogé and Chavannes sent back from Spanish territory on 29 December. The preceding month, the presence of masked brigands had been reported, and the authorities decreed: "Desirous of anticipating any circumstance that might disturb the public tranquility and of increasing, even prodigally, police means for maintaining it: we now forbid all persons of whatever status to wear masks in the streets of city or town or on the colony's main roads or at public balls."<sup>124</sup> Over the following months the press published numerous stolen pistol ads.

At Plantation Chaperon de la Taste, behind the Pères de l'Hôpital, Jean-Baptiste Cap, "leader of the almost general revolt of his work gang," was arrested. In October, "apprised that the Spaniards are trafficking in gunpowder which they bring in our cities then sell to the rebels," the Provincial Assembly of the North decreed that the Provincial Assembly as soon as possible should have a search made of every house barring none in the city of Cap and remove to deposit in the king's magazines all powder thus found.<sup>125</sup> At the same time, threats and underhanded deals were attempted in an effort to end the revolt. Alliances and bloody clashes between whites and freedmen alternate. Camped at Plantation Gallifet, the maroon "generals and chieftains" sent Blanchelande the historic proclamation which ended with the defiant "We shall never have any other motto: Liberty or Death!"

### 1792—*The Maroon War*

In the bands, new leaders arose, the best known of whom were Jeannot Bullet, Jean-François Papillon, Georges Biassou, Toussaint Bréda, and Paul Blin, killed because he lacked firmness; Romaine Rivière called the Prophetess, Pompée Benjamin, Barthélémy, Bébé Coutard, Diedonné, Carreau, Despinville, Jean Pineau, Michant, Thomas, Elie, Noël, Le Sec, Lefèvre, Halaou, Courlonge, Guiambois, Candi, Pierrot, Hyacinthe, only twenty-two, Macaya, Jean Kina, Belair. . . .

From the brains of the insurrection down to the last confused slave all were bent on resistance, seeing that an army was not crushing them to death and could not prevent them from remaining masters of the mountains whence they could always at will make sorties to burn and kill on the plains.<sup>126</sup>

Voodoo played a part. According to Colonel Malenfant:

In February 1792 we marched to attack a camp of blacks at Fond Parisien in Plaine du Cul-de-Sac. The army was composed of two thousand infantry and four hundred colonial dragoons. On approaching the camp we were astonished to see stuck in the ground along the route large perches on which a variety of dead birds had been affixed. . . . On the road at intervals there were cut up birds surrounded by stones artistically arranged, also a dozen broken eggs surrounded by large circles in zigzag. . . . After a quarter of an hour's march I saw the camp which was dotted with ajoupas ranged like

army tents. What was our surprise to see black males leaping about and more than two hundred women dancing and singing in all security. . . . The Voodoo high priestess had not fled. . . . She was a very beautiful black woman, well dressed. Had I not been hunting down the blacks, I would not have allowed her to be killed, at least not without extracting from her a great deal of information about her activities. I questioned several women in detail; some of them, from the little Gouraud plantation in Fonds Parisien knew me; they could not understand how we were able to pass through the obstacles the grand mistress of Voodoo had strewn in our way. It was due to the assurance this woman had given them that they so confidently had taken to dancing. . . . The priestess was a beautiful creole black from the des Boynes plantation. . . . In the Sainte-Suzanne Mountains we captured an Arada woman. She was of the Voodoo cult. She was taken to Cap; she was questioned, but she spoke no Creole. . . . Both the men and women frankly said that there could be no human power over her. . . . At Gouraud there was a Voodoo high priestess and a black high priest. I learned this from a woman initiate. There was a password but she would never give it to me: she claimed the women did not know it. She gave me the hand recognition sign: it was somewhat similar to that of the Masons. Very few creoles are initiated, only the children of Voodoo chiefs. She told me this as a secret, assuring me . . . I would be killed or poisoned if I tried to penetrate the great mystery of the sect.<sup>127</sup>

Another account not to be doubted is this one by a nun of the Community of the Daughters of Our Lady of Cap Français:

A former pupil (of the nun's order at Cap) later known to history as Princess Amethyste, the leader of a company of Amazons, was initiated into the Gioux or Voodoo sect, a sort of religious and dancing Masonry brought to Saint-Domingue by the Aradas, and brought into the sect a large number of her companions. The class regents used to note a certain agitation which would increase particularly after this round which they had adopted to the exclusion of all others:

Eh! eh! Bomba eh! eh!  
 Canga bafio té  
 Canga mousse délé  
 Canga do ki la  
 Canga li

We don't know if this is Senegalese or Yolof, Arada or Congo; we do know . . . these words are a sacramental Voodoo hymn. One evening the negresses left the building accompanied by a large number of female companions and went out of town into the night, singing these words incomprehensible to the whites. Now, however, the attention of the nuns had been piqued; for some time the negresses had adopted an almost uniform dress, around their bodies wearing kerchiefs in which the color red dominated; they wore sandals. At night these words foreign to the whites could be heard in chant now in



single voice again in chorus. The Voodoo king had just declared war on the colonials, and, diadem circling his forehead, and accompanied by the queen dressed in a red scarf, and agitating the little bells decorating a box containing a snake, they were marching to the assault of the colony's cities. . . They came to lay siege to Cap-Français. By the light of large braziers which notched the silhouettes of the magnificent rounds the nuns from the windows of their monastery which overlooked countryside and city were able to see the nude black women of the sect dancing to the sad sound of tambourines and lambis alternating with the shrieks of the sacrificial victims. . . .<sup>128</sup>

In conclusion here is historian Thomas Madiou's account of the very definite role of Voodoo in the Maroon wars, the battle for liberty:

At their head, the slaves place Jean-François whose lieutenants were Boukman and Flaville. They led them to victory to the sound of African music which everywhere spread terror. All of Plaine du Nord was put to fire and blood. . . . With the bands organizing, Jean-François took the title of Grand Admiral of France and General-in-Chief and his lieutenant, Biassou, that of Vice-Roy of the conquered country. They dominated these bands composed of Congos, Mandingans, Ibos, Senegalese by both superior intelligence and superstition. . . . Biassou surrounded himself with sorcerers and magicians, who composed his staff. His tent was filled . . . with objects symbolic of certain African superstitions. . . . At night great fires were kept burning in his camp; naked women performed horrible dances of frightening contortions around these fires, singing words known only in the African deserts. When exaltation had reached its zenith, Biassou, followed by his sorcerers, stood before the crowd and cried forth he was inspired by the spirit of God; he told the Africans they would be transformed to life in their old tribes in Africa if they fell in combat. Then in prolonged echoes their frightful cries carried through the distant woods; the chanting and the somber drums began again, and, exploiting these moments of exaltation, Biassou would urge his bands against the enemy, surprising them in the dead of night. Jeannot proclaimed himself the avenger of Ogé and Chavannes. He commanded under Jean-François. Like Biassou he was influenced by sorcerers. . . .

The Cul-de-Sac insurgents (an army of two thousand maroons) had at their head an African of great height and Herculean strength. He ruled by superstition, always carrying under his arm a large white cock which, he pretended, transmitted to him orders from heaven. He marched preceded by the music of drums, lambis, trumpets, and sorcerers, or *papas*, who chanted that he was invulnerable, that the enemy's cannon were only bamboo, powder, and dust. His guard carried long cowtails, which they claimed deflected bullets. . . . The Léogâne quarter was laid waste by Romaine Rivière, who had assumed the title of prophet, calling himself the godson of the Virgin Mary. He signed himself Romaine the Prophet. By superstition he dominated the slave bands he had raised in the mountains. He said Mass, sub-

jected whites to all sorts of tortures, and pretended this was ordered by the Virgin.<sup>129</sup>

In the Paris National Archives under the call numbers DXXV 118 there is a dossier containing letters, passes, and considerable documentation on Maroon chiefs. Jean-François was arrogant, proud, intelligent, and possessed a fine physique; he loved ostentation and was very brave. His general's or "grand admiral's" uniform was covered with decorations, gold braid, and stripes. It was in this sumptuous uniform that "for the purpose of inspiring respect in the troops, he would move among the ranks, whether mounted on a richly bedecked horse or in a carriage drawn by four horses, sometimes white, sometimes black."

In spite of a ferocious spirit of independence he was the least cruel of the Maroon leaders. He had attached to his army an almoner, Father Sulpice, whom he personally had saved from massacre and who in return had linked his destiny with that of the rebels, sharing the dangerous and fatiguing camp life. Like most of these authoritarian, unscrupulous leaders, he was far from being a saint. He did not hesitate to barter slaves captured in raids for guns, powder and cannon supplied by the Spanish. Biassou was rough-hewn, implacable, and excessively cruel, a leader thirsty for vengeance, murdering, and pillaging. Anger bottled up for two hundred years was now about to burst forth in reprisals on the fertile plains of the North. Romaine Rivière the Prophesier had set up his headquarters in Trou-Coffi in the Léogâne area. Apparently he had lived his marronage in the Spanish sector. . . . In the Paris dossiers of his advisor, Abbé Ouvière,<sup>130</sup> there are numerous letters by the hand of Romaine who, like Jean-François, could read and write. Like Macaya, Pierrot had learned to read and write in Saint-Domingue. He was Senegalese and Macaya, a Congo. The Maroon war, with liberty its objective, was carried on under the direction of these chiefs, to the sound of the lambi. The Saint-Domingue press published accounts of the almost daily attacks against these camps in which the blacks were holed up. These were not always, for the whites, victory bulletins since the ranks of the slave bands were swelled constantly by deserters and the situation daily became more dramatic.

In order to get the insurgent slaves in the West back on the plantations a means was employed which, although very helpful for the women, provided a very dangerous example for every black who knew how to combine ideas. Croix de Bouquets Parish awarded a hundred, and Arcahaie parish one hundred and forty-four manumissions.

Clearly, the general revolt in the North continued to spread. Like the North, the West was in arms. Here and there liberty was carved out in small segments. The Maroons did not disdain these miniscule victories, keeping



always in view the one objective of the revolution: liberty for all. At Grande Anse, Jean Kina heading an armed band daily consolidated the resistance.

The Decree of 4 April conferred on colored people—under the old regime free mulattoes and free blacks were so designated—full citizenship with voting privileges and eligibility for all functions. The battle for equality was won in this year of 1792, at the same time providing notice of the march toward liberty.

Toussaint Bréda was busy organizing the final phase. Phillibert François Rouxel de Blanchelande, King's Brigadier, lieutenant to the Governor General of the Leeward Islands of America, stepped up his attacks and, at the same time, the bargaining and appeals to the slaves in arms. In July 1792, he addressed the Maroons of Anglais Parish in these words:

From Saint-Marc to this point I have restored peace and order; I have made the workers return to their masters; everywhere the people have been welcomed by their slaves as a father by his children; wherever I have appeared work was resumed. Slaves, you whom the perverse and the wicked have led into insurrection against your masters, return to your labors, place yourselves again at the feet of those who always served you as fathers. They have decided to forgive you everything and to forget; I personally guarantee you this pardon and you can take my sacred word for it as the King's representative. . . .<sup>131</sup>

This verbal enthusiasm beggared reality. At the Platons Pass in the Hotte hills, rebels had just decimated three columns of fifteen hundred men dispersed helter-skelter by a hail of bullets, arrows, ambushes, and by sections of rock rolling down the mountains. Six thousand men arrived from Europe, eighteen hundred from Martinique. Two months later, "half of these troops were already cut down."<sup>132</sup> It was a new kind of warfare these soldiers from the Metropole had to face.

It was a war of elusive cohorts. A war against fanaticized blacks who advanced dancing and singing in the face of death. For every defeated band twenty others unexpectedly sprang up, surging through the night and blending with it in a tangle of shadows.

And these unconquerable masses poured down the mountainsides in ravaging torrents and with the day receded into inaccessible gorges. At daybreak the lambi heralded new and incessant dangers. The struggle to uncover hiding places and to attack the innumerable Maroon camps becomes exhausting. The following document gives some idea of rebel slave tactics and the daily clashes between Maroons and armed colonials. It is about a sudden raid attempted against Maroon chief Noël's band, in Cap Parish:

Advised in a letter from citizen Pommerois, post commander at Ferrier that Noël Arthaut had come to his master's plantation I went there with twenty mounted men, some fifty infantrymen from the Cap regiment and a four-

pounder; having found not a single rebel there, I marched to Plantation Druneau where without a single shot I arrested a Spanish mulatto armed with machete and dagger, three blacks whom I had tied up and five or six old men I sent to my infantry. I questioned the blacks and the mulatto who told me that Noël had arrived yesterday evening with many hands and was among some ajoupas deep in the woods of Plantation Dorlic, but that in order to get there it would be necessary to cross very extensive woods, a frightful road and waist-deep water. This story did not frighten me and I marched ahead disposing my troops accordingly; I was well guided by one of the blacks whom I mentioned to you. After a two-hour march I reached Noël's lair; we saw these wretched brigands; we laid down fire on them; they began to cry out: "To battle!" I saw this Noël, not fifteen feet from me; were it not for an accursed lagoon I could have taken him. They returned a well-directed fire; we then closed on them, and the brigands barely had time to jump into the Massacre River only a few steps from their lair; we killed several of them, and the river being very deep where they tried to cross many drowned and others were killed in the water. We lost only one man and captured a dozen good guns, pistols, sabers, powder sacks, fine powder and twenty mules and horse all saddled and bridled. Noël's mount is in my possession. . . . The elder Beaulieu brought Noël down with his first shot; he dropped his arms and managed to throw himself in the river. I believe he was wounded; I also have Noël's gold-braided blue cloth coat which he dropped and which served to protect me against the cold. That, my general, is a rough account of my expedition.<sup>133</sup>

Parallel with and sometimes bound up with it, the armed uprising of the freedmen continued. The bloody episodes in the West and the phases of the merciless struggle with pen and gun waged so courageously by the free blacks and mulattoes are well known; as are some of their names:

Pierre Pinchinat, Lubin, Golard, Louise Rateau, Louis-Jacques Beauvais, Alexandre Pétion; Carreaux, Ferdinand Deslandes, Gédéon Jourdain, Gérin, Baptiste Marmé, Eliacin Dubosc, Desmarests; Poisson, Renaud, Mme. Beaugé, Lambert Daguin, Rigaud; Pierre Coustard, Marc Borno, Obran, Doyon, Joseph Labastille, Lafontant, Faubert Larose, Morisset, Tessier; Losier, Cambe, Fouguy, Baptiste Boyé, Borgella, Lys, Dupuche, Pierre Michel, Nau, Ardouin, Labée, Bayard, Vessière, Alexis Ignace, Jean-Pierre Singla, Cameau, Bourry, Degand, Chanlatte, Barbancourt; Drouillard, Sterling, Pérocin, Paul, Jolly, Léopard, Savary, Ducla, Pinson, Périsset, Coquille, Toussaint Boufflet, Pierre Thimoté, Jean-Louis François (son of Alexis François) and de Catin (both free blacks), Nicolas Geffrard (born on Plantation Périgny of a mulatto father and Julie Coudro (Senegalese in origin), Jean-Louis Rebecca—one of whose sisters was an albino—(born to a free family of Port-de-Paix). . . . Two Cayes newspapers, *L'Observateur Colonial* and *La Gazette des Cayes* echoed the furious battles desolating the South. Their accounts and the military communiqués make it possible to



follow step by step the trail of blood bespattering every parish, "in murders, massacres, burning and pillaging. . . ." This followed the usual tactics of armed maroons and indicated, it will be seen, that mulattoes and free blacks were themselves now bringing to the struggle the terror inspired by superstitious practices.

*Cayes, January 1, 1793*

All the talk is about thefts, plundering and murders committed the last eight days by free colored men in various parts of the Province.<sup>134</sup>

*Plymouth, January 5*

Messrs. Cazenave, Molly and Marie, residents of this quarter, inform us they were obliged to arm themselves and fight several engagements against the colored men and the slaves they had roused. They killed sixty of them, after which they made a sweep of the area and picked up all the blacks scattered in the woods. . . .<sup>135</sup>

*Again, January 5, from Cayes*

The Provincial Assembly of the South plans measures to protect unfortunates fleeing death and horrors worse than death, who escape through leaping flames who, safe from the deadly fire . . . daily come through to Cayes. . . . The killings in this Plain are continuing. Hardly a day that men of color do not commit several. . . . At Plantation Maçon du Har they held up Mr. Caumont and took his blood, mixed it with rum, and dared to guzzle this horrible drink. Almost all the white proprietors and managers have withdrawn to the city. A boat from the Fer coast arrived with a hundred people, men, women and children.

*Plymouth, January 8*

The mulattoes have renewed the fight . . . the whites killed more than a hundred of these brigands.

*From Cayes*

The United Army set out anew on the fifth of this month. The city's fortifications are under command of Mr. Martineau, chief engineer for the Southern Part.

*January 15, From Jérémie*

The Army seized a Bordeaux vessel carrying a cargo of shoes hiding six hundred guns, fifty pistols and as many sabers.

*Port à Piment, Tuesday the 10th*

There was an attack by two squadrons of mounted mulattoes. Masters of

the field, they spared no one; father, mother, brother, sister, pregnant woman, nursing infant—all perished under the deadly fire of these vile assassins. More than one hundred victims.

### *From Cayes*

The rebels are trying to incite the Plaine negroes. They have had some success. Last Wednesday they succeeded in burning cane fields near Bourdet. \*

### *Port-au-Prince, February 5*

Deluded by its foolish pretensions . . . the intermediate class will always attempt to predominate over the race with which it has ties of blood and custom in a direction contrary to the will of the colonists who have done everything for the colony which in a sense belongs to them. Therefore, no more union . . . no more pact. The coalition agreement is broken.

### *From Jacmel*

Second night attack. The brigands were commanded by a *mésallié* from Cayes de Jacmel. . . . Under the direction of said Cadet Ruffi, these barbarians threw all their dead and wounded into the flames.<sup>136</sup>

### *Cayes, February 19*

The said Joseph Black, one of the leaders of the brigands, was taken alive and broken and burned alive.<sup>137</sup> On the twentieth, about nine o'clock the flames rose in Plaine and in the Camp Gérard area. At midnight the flames had spread considerably, covering a rather large area. At six o'clock we were saddened to learn that a considerable number of plantations were burned.

### *From Jacmel*

On February 10, at 5:30 A.M., the brigands who for two months had been laying siege to Jacmel attacked it during the night . . . they brought up their cannon and placed two batteries just beyond the range of the port's gun. There was continuous firing on the fort and harbor installations until ten in the morning. Their losses were 130 killed and wounded.

### *Cayes, March 8*

The army facing the rebels consisted of three hundred men of the Provence regiment, 115 Cayes volunteers, sixty-six from Plaine du Fond, twenty from Grigri, thirty from Cavaillon, eleven Americans, twenty-six "paid troopers," forty sailors, eighteen cannoneers, sixty armed blacks, 693 men all told, 633 of them white.

### *Cap, April 5*

On March 23, three thousand one hundred and seventy four infantrymen



arrived by four Bordeaux vessels and five from other ports, including Provençal. The king had ordered a savings of five million in Court expenses to be used in support of his wonderful colony, Saint-Domingue. At Camp Pagot in Jacquezi, 714 men were left dead, not to mention the cartloads of dead they removed during the night. Their losses were figured at four hundred killed and at least six to eight hundred wounded.

### *Cayes, March 11*

Names of rebel leaders killed: Joseph Bleck, Narcisse Rollin, Marcombe, Jacques Dasque, Reverseau, Charles Macé, Sixte and Charles Paulin.

Almost widespread conflagrations, buildings ruined, plantations destroyed, fields laid waste—these were the results. Saint-Marc announced new clashes. The city was taken and the Patriot army entered triumphantly, putting to the sword fourteen hundred men, as many whites as mulattoes.

### *Cayes, August 5*

Not for long did we enjoy this apparent lull. The torch invades our areas with impunity. Anses, Port-à-Piment, the neighboring Plains and those of this City . . . etc., all are in flames. Blood is again flowing.

Clearly, this war of the colored people, the mulattoes and free blacks does not lack violence either in the West or in the South. . . . It mirrors the maroons' war, employing the same tactics as the innumerable armed fugitive bands. Camped in the woods they descended upon the cities; new leaders sprang up as others fell.

Samedi Smith for example, born in Plaine du Torbec, killed his master and took to the mountains. And Janvier, at the thought of whom Baradaïres Parish trembled. . . . And Gilles Benech, nicknamed "Petit Malice," born a slave on the Solon Benech plantation in Chardonnières who, for liberty, chose to make war in the woods. Nicolas Régnier, born and raised in slavery would lay down his arms only after the Proclamation of Liberty for all. And finally, Goman, already a legend: Goman was a Congo slave on the Perrier plantation at Irois and "a frequent maroon." He loved display, and the women freedom-fighters were his great passion. He "used to wear as many as three feathers in his patched-up hat to make himself stand out." He always kept eight saddle horses and as many people to lead them, "thus affecting to be a general accompanied by his guides." Some years after the war in the South, Goman would again take to the woods, this time with Pyrame Cazal, another black group leader, to form a small army using pikes and arrows. In 1802, along with Jean Panier and the followers of Gilles Benech and Nicolas Régnier, he would again take to the woods in the fight for independence. Under Dessalines, who refused him military rank, he began the

long insurrection in Grand Anse that was to last thirteen years. Tracked down, Goman chose to throw himself into a ravine rather than be captured. Then seventy years old, he died uncompromising and free, leaving behind many wives and children and the court of honor with which he had always surrounded himself in the Grande Anse forests.<sup>138</sup>

There were other fearless, indomitable leaders camped in the woods, inciting the work gangs, ravaging the cities. They were legendary Maroons whose names would not attain the glory of the greats in our history. Leading their bands, they were, nevertheless, the foundation, the strong arms of the fight for liberty without which independence would not have been possible. For example, Mavougou, Gingembre Tropfort, Jean Rouge, Adam Duchemin, Toby, Bossou, Candé, Lubin Hudicourt, Chavanne, Métellus, l'Amérique, Sylla, Sans-Souci, Vamalheureux, Noël Prieur, Pierre Fontaine, Joseph Dessources, Destrade, Labarre, Dugotier, Bazin, Yagou, Noël Buquet, Thomas Duchemin, Sanglaou, Mathieu Fourmi, Henriette Saint-Marc, Labruni, Cacapoule, Giles Bambara.<sup>139</sup> And so many others emerging from marronage would engage in the battles for liberty and for independence, would sacrifice their lives in a war in which from the outset the accepted order of the day was "Victory or death!"

#### *1793—The Maroons Win the Battle for Liberty*

The year opened with a Nago slave revolt, an apparent indication that an increasing number of bands were composed of rebels of the same nation.<sup>140</sup>

The Cap Army yesterday broke up several camps; one detachment razed the Petite Place camp at Destouches, a Nago camp; the hail of arrows which fell upon our brave defenders did not at all dampen their ardor.<sup>141</sup>

Six days later this other army communiqué reached Cap.

The Division of the East (Army of the North) composed of 230 to 250 citizens marched to attack the brigands from Sainte-Suzanne to Grande Rivière. The attack on Camp Sec which was under the command of one Sec lasted five hours; General Desfourneaux displayed all the bravery of an old Frenchman, nine of our brothers lost their lives, eighteen were wounded; that scoundrel Sec was supported by the infamous rebel chiefs Titus, Biassou and Jean-François.<sup>142</sup> On January 31, Dondon was taken from the brigands; on the twentieth, they abandoned two large-caliber cannon. . . . Father Delahaye of Dondon was arrested in Saint-Raphael and with his inamorata was taken to Cap prison today!<sup>143</sup>

The Maroon leader Charles Sec was killed in February. Triumphant, Colonel Desfourneaux made the announcement:

With pleasure I inform you of the death of the scoundrel Charles Sec, he



was killed about thirty-five feet from the camp, behind a rock from which he attacked us. . . . If I have any satisfaction it is that among them I have killed five of their most formidable leaders in this Province. . . . I had all their ground provisions destroyed, banana trees, manioc, corn and yams which will do them more damage than our bullets.<sup>144</sup>

The colonial authority tried to starve the Maroons by destroying their crops. Gallows were kept constantly at work, thus feeding Negro charnel houses in several parishes. The result was the same. The insurrection continued. Desertions increased.

Citizen Vaisse, Grand Boucard resident, advised that all her slaves had revolted,<sup>145</sup> and citizen Moreau was selling the remainder of his blacks.<sup>146</sup>

However, after terrible reverses, the war against the Maroons was resumed with seeming success. The colonists took the Platons camp in the South and the one at Tannerie between Dondon and Grande Rivière. Biassou and Jean-François fell back. Coco-Laroche was captured and executed.

These colonial army victories did not discourage the Maroons. What was their armed strength? It is known that in the Cap region alone there were fourteen thousand Maroon women willing to accept an amnesty then in the air. The figure is astonishing but authentic. The Maroons fell back on Sainte-Suzanne and Vallières with Biassou and Belair, who dream of *Te Deums*, of a law code and a plan to direct an independent state upon invitation "by the various leaders of the nation." Their forces again "invested" the Cap environs. They gained ground and nibbled away parish after parish, repulsing attacks of the army led by General de Laveaux. Shortly afterward the insurgents under Pierrot, increased by ten thousand slaves and workers from Cap, aided by the dissensions pitting the Saint-Domingue masters against each other, invaded the city and systematically pillaged and burned it. On 6 July Jean-François and Biassou responded negatively to the peace proposals of Commissioners Sonthonax and Polvérel. Macaya moved into the eastern sector, where he was made a brigadier.

The Maroons took Camp de la Tannerie and attempted to force the cordon of the West so as to cut through the barrier separating them from the Artibonite rebellion and all liaison with the rebel blacks in the West.

Ennery was in their hands. Everything was arranged for turning over to them, Gonaïves, Petite Rivière, Verettes, Mirebalais and Croix des Bouquets. Over-all freedom was the basis for this plan agreed upon by Biassou, Jean-François, the two Guambois, Carreau, Despinville, Jean Pineau and Jacinthe.<sup>147</sup>

Pressed on all sides, at his disposal only eighteen hundred white soldiers to oppose the revolt of the blacks in the northern provinces, and worried about a final massacre being organized by the Maroons, Commissioner Sonthonax proclaimed general freedom on 29 August 1793. One month later

this was ratified by Commissioner Polvérel in the West and in the South. The battle for liberty was won.

Then began, under the genius of Bréda, the battle for independence.

I am Toussaint-Louverture, you may have heard of me. I want Liberty and Equality to reign in Saint-Domingue. I am working to bring this about. Join me, brothers, and fight with us for the common cause.

Toussaint stepped on stage. Even if by his extraordinary personality he dominated the chiefs he was nothing without the Maroon bands. The whole pregnant history, born in the grief of their entrails at first belongs to them. In the main, was there anything going on they didn't already know?

Shortly after the general insurrection, the leaders trafficked in freedom and maneuvered to increase their status and their frauds on the backs of slaves sold and resold, wholesale and retail. In an objective and well-researched study of Saint-Domingue written in a lyric style so rare for the genre, Edner Brutus violently denounced this shameful trading, giving it its true place in marronage and pointing up the real substance of color prejudice. Brutus bluntly villified Jean-François and Biassou and went so far as to accuse Toussaint Bréda of being unexpectedly tainted. This, without awaiting publication of the mostly unedited correspondence of the First of the Blacks for a possible explanation and extenuating circumstances in the face of apparently irrefutable proof. It is nonetheless true that betrayal there was, on a high level. Thus began the snuffing out of the slave's dreams. It was the beginning of the savage gamble that was to shatter the vitality of the planters and for so long, unfortunately, that of the peasant!

If, indeed, these were not cruel and contradictory maneuverings in the mystery of his breakthrough, Toussaint redeemed himself. He became a great moment in the conscience of marronage, as if it were his mission to carry on his shoulders alone the organization and evolution of the struggle too often overlooked as the work of the elusive, invisible yet ever-present Maroons.

When, after the difficult fighting in the first phase of the war against Bonaparte's army, Toussaint and his officers accepted the truce, the Maroons alone, with their pikes and machetes, held fast, invincible in the brush. They were the last ramparts.

When Toussaint's regular forces collapsed, exhausted and dismembered, his overall strategy shaken, there remained but the one supreme recourse, the Maroon guerrilla with its surprise tactics, its ambushes and its terror. It is this that would condition the pursuit of the struggle.<sup>148</sup> Thus, thanks to the Maroons alone and to the aggressive methods of marronage, the epic continued.

After Toussaint's deportation, Leclerc assigned the local generals the task of disarming the irreducible menacing bands and wiping out the rebels.



Tactic or not, Dessalines and Christophe ferociously applied themselves, often with the cruelty of armed hand-to-hand combat. They cut themselves off from the masses, thus dangerously isolating themselves. It seemed then that the final struggle would bog down in the inconsistent clutter of the dispersed, therefore weakened, bands, when there occurred the miracle of the union in the earlier and the newly free. It was the wedding of the slave and freedmen of yesterday into the invincible Blood Bloc.

As is known, Pétion renounced his mother Ursula and became Sabès.<sup>149</sup> In alliance with the enemy, he bombarded Crête à Pierrot. In spite of his distinguished service, France had decided to massacre, drown, hang, or deport the freedmen leaders, still agitating and in full rebellion. In addition to the mulatto generals Pétion, Rigaud and Boyer, several free black officers had accompanied the troop convoy: Léveillé, J. B. Belley, Delva, Vaval, and others. Other black officers had joined Leclerc's debarking troops and with them participated in the first phase of the War of Independence. Among these were Laplume, Paul Louverture, Séraphin, Patience, Célestin, Paul Lafrance, Jean-Pierre Dumesnil . . . not to mention the Maroon chiefs Lamour Dérance and Lafortune, or Toussaint's own son, Isaac,<sup>150</sup> whose unexpected desertion was both sad and inexplicable.

Some of these freedmen leaders, black and mulatto, had seen the scandalous error of their ways. They came together with the Maroons, and, united with the rebel bands, they, as many among them had already done, entered the lists. For the earlier-liberated black and mulatto freedmen, there was no alternative for self-preservation than the road to independence. And this road, becoming accessible, could only lead to marronage. These intractable, indomitable Maroons could not be disciplined by their former owners nor led by chiefs not sprung from their own ranks.

A lucid realist, Alexander Pétion understood these imperatives. Of all the greats of the Independence, he was the first to be readily elevated<sup>151</sup> by the Maroons. Curiously enough, it was largely due to him and to his prodigious efforts in mass recruitment and pulling in of freedmen, even some Maroon leaders, that the army was strengthened and consolidated. It was this army that placed itself under the bold authority of Jean Jacques Dessalines, the only legitimate, acceptable leader. From that point on it would always be on the march to the rendezvous of 1 January 1804, at the Place d'Armes in Gonaïves.

There were certainly a number of pitched battles courageously and brilliantly engaged. But, it was with the Maroons and by Maroon tactics—by raids, fire, extraordinary marches, by poisoned springs and ambushes, by a war of elusive shadows<sup>152</sup>—that the finally united people of Saint-Domingue marched to their combined liberty and independence. This whole race of farmers and warriors went into marronage.<sup>153</sup> Such in its progression is the true story of the birth of the Haitian nation. This is the unique, the exclusive glory of the Saint-Domingue Maroons, obscure and anonymous forgers of

liberty. . . . Madiou and Ardouin have invoked sordid political interests and basic discord with Toussaint Louverture to explain the attitude of certain freedmen leaders who fought on the side of the French in the first phase of the War for Independence. It was similar for the position of the black and mulatto leaders opposed to Toussaint, who, after his deportation so much wished for, required, and facilitated, were actively engaged with Leclerc in crushing Maroon resistance. This expository essay seems rather confused, based on hypotheses rather than proof. In any case, it was as if the hearts beating under the tunics of these heroes were not human and therefore subject to errors, weaknesses and the inconsistencies which at times cling to glory without diminishing its grandeur and luster.

As for the confidential letters appearing in the "Rochambeau Papers" partially acquired by the Haitian government in a Sotheby, London, sale on 17 February 1958, and since mysteriously disappeared, there are a number of copies and a facsimile of essential extracts. For some time now, this has been mentioned only in whispers as if it were some secret shame. This behavior is at once vain and ridiculous. History cannot in any case accommodate itself to these unusual rearrangements of our daily petty actions based on gossip.

We have read and reread these letters, and have no reticence in revealing their contents. What do they contain? As in Leclerc's correspondence, Rochambeau and Boudet of the Expeditionary Army claim with a great deal of boasting that they were leading Christophe and Dessalines by the nose, using them at will for the odious tasks of repression, and that, by means of favors, they were able to count on their complete allegiance. We know how much credence can be placed on the suspect testimony of officers inclined to every base maneuver, who took recourse in corruption and, by cowardice and the betrayal of military honor, kidnapped Toussaint-Louverture.

Besides, what were these allegations and boastings worth when they were so quickly, so completely given the lie by events that neither Leclerc, Rochambeau, or Boudet could prevent? Especially so long as marronage remained vital, arms at the ready, to force Destiny and to summon the local leaders to the duty which, it is proven, none of them had renounced, despite the most dramatic of apparent changes in circumstance, and any reckless inopportune and shortsighted settlement of accounts.

Neither the "Leclerc Letters" nor the "Rochambeau Papers" can tarnish the glory of the heroes of our Independence. Much less the mouthings of pygmies such as we are, in comparison with the giants of our history, whether Toussaint, Dessalines, Pétion, Christophe, Capois, Morpas,<sup>154</sup> Clerveaux, Lamartinière, Marie-Jeanne, Magny. . . .

Whence, if not from that same Boudet, comes this admission in a letter of 26 December Fructidor (13 September) devoted to Dessalines and taken from these same "Rochambeau Papers": "He is the only man who knows how to successfully wage war in the colony, we are only fifth-graders com-



pared with him. . . ." And is it not Rochambeau himself who, in a letter to Leclerc dated 9 October, warned that "Under cover of the confidence accorded him Dessalines conspires in silence . . ."?<sup>155</sup>

The abscess must be lanced. The famous "Rochambeau Papers" must be demystified. For certain destroyers of our household gods used these papers for clandestine essays characterized equally by pettiness, thoughtlessness, and stupidity, not to mention the appetite of the vulture . . .

We have celebrated the valor of the leaders who by their great stature dominate the history of marronage, while we relegate to the shadows the anonymous mass of little people, obscure and without rank. They were, however, each day's collective courage driving the bands and, song in heart, rising to the assault for liberty. It was this that Boukman had exhorted in the Ceremony of Bois Caïman:

Couté la Liberté dan coeur à nous!\*

They especially have the right to figure in the honors list of the victory they fashioned with their tears, their sweat, and blood, to present to Liberty this hallowed bouquet. For this reason will their names ever be told as in some sacred litany. Slave names, simple and gauche. Names in rags and tatters. Names stripped bare. Names so brief, so poor, with only monosyllables to designate these giants of our history. And, like some burst of fireworks celebrating a battle, all those heroes whom we can rediscover shall fill the final pages of this volume.

Thus we will have accorded their memory the homage of respect and admiration due this "shadowy people" who were the only light in the long colonial night. Thus, their calm courage will again come to life, each day nibbling away at liberty and on the smoking ruins of Saint-Domingue, creating for us the Haitian fatherland.

This book would have been incomplete and vain without this offering of filial piety and without extracting the bitter, the terrible lesson it includes. This alone was our aim. Not simply an archival research.

Now is the moment of truth. The time to show that their victory was shamelessly violated. Three centuries of tears and blood, so much anguish, suffering and sacrifice will have vanished on the winds of our own egoism. If, in the history of the world, crime exists, if there were but a single crime, this indeed is it. . . .

The mystification began with the Proclamation of General Freedom. What did all the "generous" decisions forced on Commissioners Sonthonax and Polvérel actually amount to?

All blacks and mixed bloods presently in slavery are declared free. Blacks now attached to their former masters' plantations are required to remain

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\* Hear how our hearts cry out for liberty!

there; they will be employed to work the land. The work day will begin at sunrise and end at sunset (with two breaks for meals). During crop time the work day in sugar mills will be lengthened to eight o'clock at night. Every morning a half-hour before daybreak the drivers will awaken them by the sound of a clock or goat horn or lambi. Punishment by the whip for breaches of discipline will be replaced by shackles for one, two, or three days. The most severe penalty will be the partial or complete loss of salary. All men without property who are neither enrolled for or engaged in farming and are found wandering about shall be arrested and sent to prison. Whoever shall turn water to his account whether to water his own provision ground or for other use shall be considered to have diverted the water and shall be punished accordingly. Horned cattle, sheep and hooved animals not belonging to the plantation shall be subject to . . . forfeiture or seizure and delivery rights even when they have been found on the pastures, in the woods or other uncultivated land of said plantation. For men over the age of eighteen the monthly salary will be four gourdes, and for women above eighteen thirty escalins, for youth of both sexes from fourteen to eighteen, two gourdes. . . .<sup>156</sup>

And now as if it were necessary to open up and deepen the wound and the deceit, listen to Etienne Polvérel. His words ring out like a knell over the slave who is about to be told that neither land nor water belongs to him and that, despite having won freedom, his hands are empty:

Today you are being persuaded that because you have been liberated and since the idea is to improve your lot you ought to have larger gardens than when you were slaves. But I say to you that those little gardens formerly required by law, and a prime necessity for you, are today superfluous and that they can be justly taken from you and at no disadvantage. Previously you were given the barest minimum in clothes and provisions for keeping you alive. There was no concern, no concessions for the adequacy and the health conditions of your quarters, nor for the little comforts of your households. For each of you your garden products were a supplementary resource to meet needs they did not care to ascertain or satisfy.

Today you yourselves are the judges of the kindnesses accorded you, which they will include in the surtax (*faisance valoir*) and deduct off the top. . . . Therefore less than ever do you need your little gardens. Nevertheless I do not wish to divest you of them; but I cannot permit them to exceed the usual prescribed limits: thirty by twenty feet, that is, a surface of six hundred feet, or again sixteen gardens per carreau. Africans, hear me well. You have the right to rest on Sunday, Monday, or every day of the week if you choose. No one has the right to require you to work a single day against your wishes. That is the scope of your freedom. But you have to feed and dress yourself; you will occasionally want to treat your friends. You want your wives to be well dressed to do you honor, to look more beautiful. You want to be well dressed yourselves and comfortably housed whether to please your wives or for your health and theirs and your children's health. The only means for your supplying these wants is the produce of the land. The land does not



belong to you. It belongs to those who bought it, to those who inherited it from the earliest acquirers.

The more land you would be given for your own use, the more you would come to dislike working the communal lands on the plantation; each of you would prefer to cultivate the piece of land from which all the produce would be yours than to work lands where you would have to share the income with proprietors and other planters; everything would then be yours, the proprietor would no longer receive anything. In making you free, the Republic was determined also to provide you the means for living happily and in comfort; but on the condition that you contribute your utmost to the welfare of others.<sup>157</sup>

—The land does not belong to you. Not even the water.

—Henceforth it is your destiny to contribute to the happiness of others.

It was all laid out from the very beginning, and it is Etienne Polvérel who would reveal to the Saint-Domingue Africans the life of exploitation to which the slave, become farmer, then peasant, in the free Republic of Haiti, would be condemned. Provide the welfare of others!

. . . From that time on slaves were not branded. They were granted unofficial freedom (*liberté de savane*) and the right to work and hand over their coffee, their cotton, and all the products of their sweat to new masters, so that the latter could continue to grow fat, to polish a mannered, parasitic elite. For them, the slaves of yesteryear and today would have neither schools, nor dispensaries, nor subsistence. They would have to continue to relieve their bodily needs in the open air and, like the beasts, drink pond water. . . . It was no longer even envisaged to give them two suits of clothes per year, or farming tools, a little garden, and some cassavas. Their language, beliefs, and customs were subjected to study, like so many curious demographic islets, as earlier the Circle of Philadelphians in Cap used to do.

It was a world apart for which special "laws" were reserved. They were called rural codes, rural police, rural markets, rural priests, rural property. . . . A few budgetary crumbs assured the republic by these "laws" were also provided. The elite now fought for the privilege of defending their interests, and this advantageous monopoly was greedily debated in the name of imported methods, new ideologies, and even on the basis of a skin color closer to their own.

The task of defender was an absolutely safe one. No special aptitude was required. All one had to do was to promise seeding in season and to forget at harvest time. Although these peasant slaves represented 90 percent of the population they were, after all, a simple excrescence of no significance. They came to believe they were in no way a part of the nation. It was so long ago they had created Independence fashioned over their flame and decorated with their blood. And so long since they founded this nation of farmers and warriors. Had there been concern for them, there would no longer be need for revolution. God alone knows how much neocolonialism

there has been during this century and a half! And, without a revolution, what would become of the defenders of the peasant-slave?

That is another story—the story of a wasted country in which the slave, humiliated, fleeced, and flayed, held fast the patience to live and to die with a smile above his teeth.

The game was fixed.

The cards were scrambled.

And no one was concerned about demanding a new deal. To what terrible moral depravity, to what perfection in unawareness has the colonial heritage brought us?

Assigning blame is a futile exercise. Who among us has no need to proclaim his guilt and to cover himself with ashes before the age-long curse and the great pity of our land. It is perhaps at this point fitting to repeat the poet's commandment:

Sing this race so stout, sing this people just  
Make them stronger still as you extol their strength  
Forge and teach them tones to sing their rage

Now is certainly the time to rectify the bitter frustration. The time to come together for the great task to which, in desperation, the Maroons of Liberty are calling us. For this common task there remains to us, in the twilight of a life approaching its term, one derisive bit of fortune. And that is, with trembling hands to append to this book, perhaps our last message, the offering ventured by the sentry, like the song of the final anguish, the final cartridge:

Having found this word in my heart  
Now may I, having spoken it, die. . . .

For so long, from generation to generation, everything was turned upside down, carried off, shattered. Except for hope, which stoutly withstood the withering blasts. It is, nevertheless, of love that the isolated voices would speak, avoiding the temptation of littering the dream with personal ambitions. And each time, the wind blew at our door, carrying off these new buds like swirls of dead leaves. How many have been made blind by too long a surfeit of tears? Thus, after uncertainties in distant wanderings, Time has leadened our pace. . . . When the dawn breaks, our bones will have been bleached in the salt and the heat of our land. It matters not if earlier our spray of flowers be tied, if only the morrow will bring, written and numbered on the slate an account, this time more vivid and skillful, of the glory of our Maroons and, permeating the heart of our countryside with the echoing song of the roosters, a call full of newly awakened murmurings. . . . If tomorrow our children weave fresh garlands and celebrate in song the legend of the last Maroon, that golden burst of a new dawn. . . .



1. Actually, many colonists hid their losses but in their correspondence continued to indicate the evils of marronage. Begouën-Demeaux cites the following from a letter of a Foäche overseer. "Daily the number of maroons increases and their daring even more so." Many other letters in the same vein from colonists have been published.
2. Beaudrun Ardouin, I, 49.
3. Père Cabon I, 166; II, 265.
4. Minutes of the Assemblée Générale de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue, morning session of 15 September 1791, in *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, 22 October 1791.
5. Proclamation of 5 October 1791. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, p. 1018. In addition to direct threats, there was considerable "parleying" with Maroon bands.
6. *La Rebelión del Bahoruco*, by Manuel Arturo Pena Battle, 1948, is a rich source, especially for its evocation of Cacique Henry and the Indian uprisings beginning in 1504 after the rebellion of the Africans.
7. Ardouin, I, 49. "The slaves run away in groups to join him."
8. "We have little solid information on the true leaders of this abominable conspiracy. . . . Only time and more exact information will clarify the mystery." Colonists' letters cited by F. Thésée, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
9. Information from Bryan Edwards who arrived at Cap a month after the revolt. Also from Jonathan Brown, Pamphile de Lacroix (I, 101), Madiou, Beaubrun and Céligny Ardouin, and others. Gragnon Lacoste, *Vie de Toussaint Louverture*, p. 29 notes that Jean-François "long before the revolution had fled his master's house and taken up maroon life in the mountains."
10. These plots are highlighted in advertisements long before the great revolts. For example, in 1776 (*A.A.*, 10 July) there is the case of Marie-Louise, claiming to belong to Dossou a free Negro in Cayes, kidnapped with her master by Maroons, embarked by them in a canoe and landed near Montrouis.
11. Debbasch tended to do this in justification of his efforts to prove that marronage was a simple slave illness of little importance.
12. A final example of the tradition of marronage and its methods of terror was provided by Charlemagne Peralte's Caco uprising against the American occupation in 1915. These are the same tactics that Goman and his lieutenants Malfair and Malfou used from their hideaway at Grand Doco in 1819 on the Hotte and Macaya Heights, where so many Maroon bands continued their resistance to slavery.
13. Previously reported and highlighted by Mentor Laurent, Etienne Charlier. See also Descourtiz.
14. Emile Hayot, *Les Gens de couleur libres du Fort Royal, 1769-1823*, Paris, 1971.
15. Fernando del Prado, *Historia de Cuba, Havana*, 1957.
16. José L. Franco. *Historia de la Revolución de Haiti*, p. 35.
17. Dr. José María Chacon y Calvo, *Collection de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de Hispano-América*.
18. Dr. Apolinar Tejera, *Rectificaciones Históricas*, Caonabo y Maincaotex. See Franco, p. 29.
19. Father Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Histoire de l'Isle espagnole ou de Saint-Domingue*, Paris, Jacques Guérin, MDCCXXX, Tome I, p. 229.
20. Charlevoix, *op. cit.*, I, 287-288.
21. Charlevoix, I, 363.
22. A 1551 cedula ordered Diego Columbus to mark distinctively imported slaves, Indian or African: "*se les haga e ponga una senal en la pierna*,"

23. The first sugar factory on the island dated from 1505 and belonged to one Aguilon. There were twenty water and four horse-driven mills in 1547. In addition to the development of a lumber industry and gold mining cattle rearing, begun on a large scale with those brought over on Columbus's second voyage, also increased. The demand for strong arms continued to grow.
24. Charlevoix, I, 407, 422.
25. *Ibid.*, 347.
26. In 1527, Alonzo de Perada requested the Spanish Crown to send an indispensable twenty-five hundred Africans to Hispaniola (Cuban Academy of History, *Car-bonel Papers*).
27. Charlevoix, I, 423, 424.
28. Father le Pers. *Histoire Civile, Morale et Naturelle de l'Isle de Saint-Domingue*, cited by Jose L. Franco, p. 35.
29. The massacre in which Queen Anacoana perished. Ovando put to death the father and grandfather of Cacique Henry who reigned in Bahoruco.
30. These biographical notes are taken from Oviedo, Las Casas, and especially from numerous unedited documents published in Pena Battle's *La Rebelión del Bahu-ruco*. See also Baron Emile Nau, *Histoires des Caciques d'Haiti*, 1894.
31. Saint-Méry, 1130, 1131, Tome II.
32. Charlevoix, II, 122-124. Saint-Méry gives the same version. According to Saint-Méry, Tarare Mountain is "near the present boundaries of Borgne parish."
33. César de Rochefort, p. 342.
34. Vaissière, p. 21.
35. Charlevoix, II, pp. 235-236.
36. Vaissière, p. 232.
37. *Idem.*, p. 235.
38. A. N. Colonies, F3 90, 27 May 1705.
39. Loix et Constitutions II, pp. 25, 26.
40. Cabon, I, p. 110.
41. *Idem.*, I, p. 111.
42. Ordonnance des Administrateurs de Saint-Domingue, 5 July 1717. Cited by P. Gisler, p. 80.
43. Dessalles IV, p. 74.
44. Vaissière, p. 235.
45. Saint-Méry, 111, p. 1395.
46. Cabon, I, p. 112.
47. *Idem.*
48. Charlevoix, II, 500.
49. Cabon, I, p. 147.
50. *Idem.*
51. Saint-Méry, I, p. 207.
52. *Revue d'Histoire des Colonies*, February 1929, p. 68.
53. Saint-Méry, III, 1395, 1396.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 1397.
55. Cabon, I, p. 147.
56. Saint-Méry, I, p. 163.
57. Saint-Méry, I, p. 183 and *Loix et Constitutions*, IV, pp. 399, 402, 418. A. Des-salles, p. 333ff.
58. A. N. Colonies F 3, vol. 68.
59. Cabon, I, p. 165.
60. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 165, 166.
61. Vaissière, p. 238.
62. Saint-Méry, 111, p. 1271.



63. Letter of Dubois de Lamotte, cited by Vaissière, p. 235.
64. Cabon, I, pp. 251-252.
65. A. N. Co., vol. 11, cited by Vaissière, p. 247.
66. Dufresne de Pontbriand, Trévan's son-in-law, in Limbé.
67. These were the dances slaves were permitted to attend on Saturday and fête days. More often it is written *calinda* instead of *calenda*.
68. Saint-Méry, II, pp. 629-631, Archives Col. E 295.
69. Cited by Gisler, *op. cit.*, p. 54. *Relation d'une conspiration tramée par les nègres dans l'Isle de Saint-Domingue*, pp. 2-5.
70. Also cited by Gisler, *op. cit.*, p. 177.
71. Vaissière, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-238, 245-249, 263.
72. Cabon, p. 228-229.
73. Various ordinances of the Conseil du Cap, 7 April 1758, 12 March 1759, cited by Gisler, pp. 79-80.
74. Vaissière, p. 249.
75. Cabon, I, p. 229. These Negro beadles are the ancestors of the rural priests (peressavanes).
76. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haiti*, I, p. 73.
77. Félix Carteau, former Saint-Domingue colonist, *Les soirées bermudiennes*. The same Abbot de La Haye from Quartier-Morin who, upon leaving in 1768, put up for sale "five horses, ten horned cattle, two blacks and one mixed blood," *Avis du Cap*, 21 November 1768.
78. *Moniteur Général de Saint-Domingue*, 31 January 1793.
79. Girod Chantrans, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
80. Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 68-69.
81. Cabon, I, p. 246.
82. There is a work by this priest on coffee growing. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, 1791.
83. *S.A.A.*, 24 July 1773.
84. Pamphile de Lacroix, I, pp. 108-112.
85. The source for this document as given in that work: Colonies F 390, Archives Nationales de Paris.
86. Cited by Gisler, *op. cit.*, pp. 185, 199, 200, from the texts of Fathers Margat and Fauque.
87. See *Les Marrons du Syllabaire*, p. 45.
88. Cabon, I, pp. 267-268.
89. Vaissière, p. 249.
90. Cabon, I, pp. 299-300.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 313.
92. Cabon, I, p. 313.
93. Gastonnet des Fosses, *Saint-Domingue sous Louis XV*, p. 36.
94. Colonies F3—71.
95. Cabon, I, 347.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 347.
97. Cabon, I, pp. 347-371.
98. *Ibid.*, pp. 347-371.
99. Cited by Vaissière, p. 249.
100. Cabon, I, pp. 365-378.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 378.
102. Cabon, p. 372.
103. *Ibid.*
104. Cited by Vaissière, p. 230. Letter 23 December 1783.
105. Saint-Méry, II, pp. 1131-1136.

106. Archives Nationales de Paris, dossier Colonies C9B 35, Pièce No. 7, Administration Générale.
107. Bégouen Demeaux, *Mémorial d'une famille du Havre*, pp. 110, 111.
108. Saint-Méry, I, pp. 275-276.
109. Cabon, II, 452, 453.
110. *Revue d'Histoire des Colonies*, February 1929, p. 724. Indicated reference Colonies F 3 192.
111. Cited by Vaissière, 186, *Notes historiques* F3 150.
112. Begouen-Demeaux, p. 137.
113. Roger Massio, *Lettres de Bigourdans dans Saint-Domingue*.
114. The name Dutty is provided by Céligny Ardouin.
115. Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil, with the collaboration of the Brothers of Christian Instruction. *Manuel d'Histoire d'Haiti*, pp. 77, 78, 1934 edition.
116. Pauléus Sannon, *op. cit.*, I, p. 89.
117. "Cécile Fatiman, the wife of Louis-Michel Pierrot, who commanded a native battalion and later became president of Haiti, took part in the ceremony of Bois Caïman. A Mambo and the daughter of an African mother and a Corsican prince, she had green eyes and long silky hair. She and her mother had been sold for Saint-Domingue. Her mother also had two sons who were swallowed up by the slave trade, leaving no traces. Cécile Fatiman lived in Cap to 112 years, in full possession of her faculties." Notes from General Benôit Rameau, son-in-law of President Pierrot, published by Etienne Charlier, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
118. As reported by Herard Dumesle. Its authenticity is often doubted although adopted by Pauleus Sannon and thus become "classic." Of course, like many of our earlier historians Dumesle never cited sources.
119. Sannon, I, 90.
120. This story has never been used. It has the merit of describing with first-hand information the tragic end of the celebrated Boukman, arms in hand.
121. *Journal des Débats de l'Assemblée Coloniale*, 7 November 1791.
122. Cited by Aimé Césaire, *Toussaint-Louverture*, p. 162.
123. Gastonnet des Fosses. *La Revolution de Saint-Domingue*, p. 90.
124. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*. Ordinance of 12 January 1791.
125. Morning session of October 1. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*.
126. Pamphile de Lacroix, I, 224.
127. Malenfant, p. 215.
128. See *Les Marrons du Syllabaire*, pp. 39-40. "Lettre annuelle de l'Ordre de Notre Dame," Bordeaux, 1889. See *Notice historique sur la Communauté des Religieuses Filles de Notre Dame au Cap Français (Saint-Domingue) fondée en 1733*, p. 203.
129. Madiou, pp. 71, 97, 181.
130. Archives Nationales de Paris D XXV-110. Pascalis Ouyvière.
131. *Moniteur général de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue*, Tuesday, 30 July 1792.
132. Lacroix, I, 223.
133. *Moniteur* . . . , Monday, 31 December 1792. Extract of citizen Pageot's letter to citizen Governor General Rochambeau, 7/12/92.
134. *L'Observateur Colonial*, 1 January 1792.
135. *L'Observateur Colonial*, 5 January 1792.
136. *Observateur Colonial*.
137. This announcement of 23 February 1792 and those following are from the *Gazette des Cayes*.
138. These freedmen's names and the biographical notes on the Maroon chiefs are taken from Céligny Ardouin.



139. Madiou, especially in I, II, and III, cites these names of group leaders in the course of his account.
140. On the subject of the Sans Souci bands Madiou, in 1803, observes: "As in Africa they fight in tribal units preceded by their sorcerers and emblems of their superstitions."
141. *Moniteur général*, 23 January 1793.
142. *Idem.*, 29 January 1793.
143. ——— 31 January 1793.
144. ——— 12 February 1793.
145. ——— 16 February 1793.
146. ——— 8 April 1793.
147. Polvérel's statements in his Proclamation of 21 September 1793.
148. Bonaparte foresaw this. In his secret instructions to Leclerc he wrote, "The third stage will be that in which neither Toussaint, Moyse, nor Dessalines will be alive and when three thousand to four thousand blacks withdrawn into the hills . . . will organize as Maroons, as they say in the islands. . . ." Actually the number of Maroons was to multiply by tens and twenties.
149. Pétion was the son of a colonist, Pascal Sabès and a mulatto woman, Ursule, by Sabès. The illegitimate boy being as dark as an Indian mestizo the father doubted his paternity and refused to give his name to the boy. Anne-Alexandre then took the surname "Pétion," which had been given him by a neighbor woman (*pitchoun* meaning, in Provençal "my little one"), a word which was transformed into *Pikion*, *Pition*, and finally *Pétion* by the workers of Mrs. Guiole, the neighbor, a silversmith by profession. See Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*.
150. Isaac was the only one to countersign Abbé Coismon's letter asking Toussaint to come to terms with LeClerc even before the dramatic interview between Toussaint and his sons. (Unedited letter of Coismon's, collection of Dr. Chatillon.) Isaac died without heir. Through marriage with the daughter of the Marquis de Lascaze Placide became connected with the French nobility. See General Nemours, *Histoire de la descendance et de la famille de Toussaint Louverture*.
151. As seen by Edner Brutus, Was the battle against Sylla in which Pétion participated less brutal? Besides, the Maroon chiefs who "enthroned" Pétion were Macaya and Sans Souci. The new Haitian school, especially with Roger Dorsinville's solid "Toussaint L'ouverture" has singularly elucidated this point.
152. During the truce which continued after Toussaint's deportation Christophe, speaking of Sans-Souci and Toussaint's Maroon tactics, confided to Pamphile de Lacroix, "He did better than we did when you landed; if then, instead of fighting, our system of resistance had consisted in withdrawing and frightening the blacks, you would not have been able to touch us. Old Toussaint kept saying this, but no one would listen. We had arms; our pride in using them betrayed us. . . ." *Lacroix*, II, 227, 228.
153. Shortly before his death, Leclerc had written the First Consul, "Here is my opinion on this country. We must destroy all the black men and women in the hills sparing only those children under twelve years of age, destroy half of those in the plains and allow to remain in the colony not a single colored man who ever wore epaulets. Short of this, the colony will never be peaceful." (7 October 1802, 15 Vendémiaire an XI.)
154. This is the way (and not Maurepas) that this indigenous general spelled his name in a signed letter dated 9 February 1802 found in the *Rochambeau Papers* and addressed to General Humbert. "I order you," he writes, "to withdraw immediately failing which I shall greet you with bullets. . . ." In the *Affiches* of 7 December 1779 we have found an ad placed by one Toussaint Morepas (sic) about his runaway slave, Jean, a twenty-two-year-old Congo.

155. In September 1793 a Rochambeau letter to LeClerc dated 27 vendémiaire (September), some 10 days before the former's death, was sold at Charavay's in Paris. In it Rochambeau writes that "Dessalines is the king-pin of all our difficulties, and once he is taken all the others will become disheartened . . . (I know) for certain that Dessalines has sent word to the insurgents in the Port-au-Prince and Jacmel hills to hold on a bit longer for he would soon join them."
156. *Revue d'Histoire des Colonies*, Vol. XXXVI, 1949, 3rd and 4th trimestres. Documents on the origins of Abolition. Proclamations by Polvérel and by Sonthonax, 1793-1794.
157. Written at Oshiel du Fond, a little plantation on Isle à Vache, 7 February 1794, third year of the French Republic. Signed, "Polvérel." For the record it should be noted that in a Proclamation of 27 August 1793 Polvérel had projected the distribution of lands to the Maroons, they being farmers as well as fighting men. This was but an adroit parry against the liberation plan of the brothers Jean and François Guyambois, Biassou and Jean-François that called for "the distribution of all property by way of sale." It was for freedom made real by possession of land that the Maroons had fought. Their sacrifice was in vain, nullified by the conspiracy mounted against them by whites and freedmen of all colors. It is this same conspiracy characterized by hoaxes, dispossessions and scandalous plundering which through sham, ambiguities and rare samples of social justice will be continued against the peasant. . . .



# VIII

## THAT GOLDEN DAWN

from "GERBE DES QUATRE DITS"

*. . . Accursed womb of the new era . . . tolling, tolling knells and necklace of malediction . . . twilights and mornings spreading across mountains of spoken and written words, of snuffed-out dreams. . . . Beguiled by promises and programs, in bitter servitude to his brothers of every class and color, alike responsible for his long distress, merciless bloodsuckers, drivers insatiable for his sweat, unmoved by his emaciation, sharpening their fangs, their rapacious claws, the slave brother with his coarse blue shirt, his clay pipe, stands outside the door, measuring his hunger and thirst. . . .*

*Like the pods of the sablier distending, swelling under the sun, his anger now was at the bursting point. . . .*

*One day he would demand a reckoning  
and what of the mead of justice meted out in dishonest measure from  
the faked goblets of the masters  
and the surnames and baptismal certificates of creole and bossale all  
jumbled in the cupboards?*

*Holy Virgin, what have they done with his coffee, his cotton, with his courage  
and his fatigue. . . . Forty million each year . . . for so long . . . so long . . .  
for him there were no roads, oh! no dispensaries, no light, no schools, nor  
bread,  
nor water. . . .*

*Where now is Macandal's scepter,  
The Emperor's noble drum  
And the happy foulard coiffing the woman  
by the water's edge?*

*And Marilisse filled with anger. . . .*

*Marilisse, O beautiful blue-red<sup>1</sup> woman  
once lying languidly in the hammock of Night  
and now awakened and standing on the greening hill  
blouse bursting with the twin offering of the promises*

---

<sup>1</sup> The name Marilisse is the symbol of the Haitian land and flag.



*and the murmuring of the orchard,  
valiant black woman wet with dawn and dew*

*henceforth forever fixed in our dreams  
pulsing deep in our flesh  
refreshing coolness of palm and spring moving through our very essence  
with sandals unfettered, soft as tufts  
of watercress under naked feet  
and the madras of pollen-colored wings  
and loosened gown sliding off her high bosom  
over her sculptured loins  
and in the swaying of her hips set free in sudden  
revelation  
of her quivering nakedness.  
Marilisse, now stripped of shade  
and dazzlingly sensual,  
beneath thy feet will I sow basil,  
with jasmine and hibiscus shall I adorn thy flesh.  
Oh, so beautiful! moonbeams dance in thy glance.  
With what perfumed tresses will I again adorn the polished ebony of your skin  
and what samba will speak the music of thy voice and the bright  
of thy smile, thee, my country, my frontier and the gateway  
of my bewilderment  
thou the kiss, the sunflower, the sweet manioc  
and the bread of our courage stronger than rum,  
thy name sings forth as does the cricket  
O turtle dove drunk with garden perfumes and the golden bursts of sunlight  
"O gazelle frantic in the snares of desire."  
I see thee, black woman,  
naked and flawless,  
the dossas\* flag everywhere  
on the rounded hill, caressed by the flutter of trembling hands, and in the  
valley where frolics the wind, heedless of the heat of the rich heavy soil . . .  
Where you are not, Marilisse,  
Marilisse-Hope  
now urging me forward. . . .*

*He reckoned his poverty in his empty hands held out to the cool evening  
breeze and his anger was the silent urgency of the yam breaking through  
the tamped earth. . . .*

---

\* A woman considered privileged because she was born after twins. The masculine form is dossou.

*At sunrise*

*seven times he sharpened his steel blade on the smooth millstone  
blade most beautiful  
sacred,*

*most faithful and omniscient,  
shining and straight,*

*seven times he whetted it on the hard stone.*

*The first time, for the dead rotted away in Guinea baracoons, their bones  
forever scattered.*

*The second time, for blacks hung head down from riggings of slave ships.*

*The third, for the sickened new arrivals unwanted in the slave marts, sold by  
the ton or pitilessly cast into the deep.*

*The fourth time, for the rebel Bambaras branded like beasts,*

*for the Dahomeans with hamstrings severed, and Yolofo burned alive,*

*for Ibos burned in the dry bagasse,*

*for Mondongo women shorn of bracelets and necklaces,*

*strewn in ravines the brood of hope and the already tormented buds in the  
warmth of their wombs*

*for the virgins taken without scruples in the big house,*

*for the creoles hanged in the fields,*

*for the whip falling upon withering breasts*

*and on the anguished cry of the nursling,*

*for the worn-out old man summoned mornings by the clock,*

*for the sickly little boys and girls unprotected by amulets buried in the soil,*

*for all those Aradas crushed like cane in the mill of poverty and suffering.*

*The fifth time, knee to earth, for the Ancestors and for their memory so often*

*sullied by the sacrilegious scavengers and idle ruminants who would, if the  
spelling of our vanished glories could provide nourishment, wax fat,*

*head bared and kneeling*

*for Toussaint Bréda, the great oak whose last leaf rots in soil so far  
from his warm Dahomey clay.*

*for the invincible Emperor, with courage undaunted*

*and the bleeding stumps of his valiance*

*and his legend slashed to ribbons*

*gathered all in shreds*

*within the shabby sack by the blessed hands of a demented woman,\**

*for his son, Charlemagne, four-nailed to the door, corpse dragged through  
the dust,*

*for the melancholy Hero with heart of barley sugar, seen now with new-found  
vision at rest in the gentle reflection of a tear still wet,*

---

\*Her name was Défilée.



*and for the proud, the fearsome king who to the rumbling voices of cannon  
convoked the gods to the battlements of his Citadel.*

*The sixth time, for the slave heights and for the tillers dead long  
before their time,*

*for those more unfortunate, they who lost their confidence, their powers  
of mind and, Lord have mercy, their will to live.*

*The seventh and last time, for Marilisse*

*O beautiful, blue-red woman,*

*again one and indivisible,*

*for her alone he whets his blade of steel,*

*blade most beautiful,*

*sacred,*

*most faithful and omniscient,*

*shining and straight.*

*When the gleaming steel deflected the sun's warm rays  
to his hand,*

*in the name of the living and the dead*

*and for Marilisse*

*he blew his lambi, and over the countryside there spread  
the cry of the wounded beast*

*and soil and sea joined, with conspiring wombs, to multiply  
the sonorous resonance rising from the spiraled conch.*

*Facing the west, toward the blue crest, so chill*

*in the muslin mesh of fog*

*and the perfume of berries and pungent pine,*

*then, toward the rising sun, with all his strength he blew,*

*spanning the valleys and the beds of unruly streams,*

*scaling the hills amidst the scattered songs of wild turtledoves,*

*climbing higher toward the first of the high-perched sleeping mountains,*

*and toward those others hung by distant cords from the horizon*

*with their touches of light and the majestic fold of their backs*

*and those sensed beyond the range of sight,*

*topped with verdure.*

*For all the valiant blacks of mountain and plain,*

*for all the villages henceforth gathered in a single sheaf,*

*he sounded, on his pink seashell*

*the cry of the wounded beast. . . .*

*Then, impossible to number, his footsteps,  
descending from Maribaroux, from Cahos,*

from Macaya,  
 Selle and Matheux,  
 became as a whirlwind on the route and his voice was like the roll of  
 thunder . . .  
 when he burst through the gates of the City,  
 cursed guardian of the key to the granges

of the sacred book of the Fathers  
 and of the shards of heritage. . . .  
 The blood on the pavement and walls would well have sufficed  
 to lave the sullied acres,  
 as the rain of petals greeting the fruit at the last cutting  
 and the dew spangling with stars the sealed offering and the  
 dizzied senses of supinely thrown pubescent girls.  
 Coolness of humid moss  
 and delights awakened in the secret of yielding thighs,  
 O scarlet keys of birth-givings all alike  
 in accompanying fear and cry,  
 but sweetly liberating in the ultimate contentment!  
 For man was free of hate  
 and his heart was true and steadfast,  
 orderly and clean  
 cleansed and immaculate from peristyle  
 to rear of the house where rests the sacred urn.  
 He thrust his machete, all red, deep into the earth and said:  
 "Good. Comes the new moon, we will gather up the corner stakes  
 and on this spot together we will build the communal dwelling."

And his voice was a fluttering of wings  
 entangled in foliage and  
 so welcome to the ear  
 because he knew best the words of love  
 and because already, beneath his shirt, in his sap, coursing in his veins,  
 in the pit of his stomach and in his burning hands,  
 he felt, with the weight of his destiny,  
 the quivering of roots and buds  
 of a land regained  
 with forests new,  
 solid and tall,  
 squared to the line. . . .  
 Weave ribbons for the dossa drunk with honey  
 Amidst the innocence of foliage and the cool of the first morning,



*Marilisse moved forward,  
damped by dawn and dew  
and the man, in his ebb and flow, moved to meet  
the whirlwind of her hips  
the painful wounding of her lips  
the savage anger of her firm breasts  
the trembling of corollae caught by surprise. . . .*

*How beautiful the land married to Hope!  
and, large in her expanded joy,  
crowned with palms,  
a young girl ripened under the  
bright red sun and,  
bearing the scent of childhood and fern joined henceforth  
to the flesh of man and to a shared joy!*

*Weave ribbons and garlands for the dossa drunk with love!  
A new life thrills and preens its feathers for the calinda of the rainbow. . . .*

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CARTE DE L'ISLE DE SAINT DOMINGUE

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assujettis aux Observations Astronomiques  
Par G. de l'Isle premier Geographe du ROY, de l'Academie R<sup>e</sup> des Sciences  
A AMSTERDAM  
Chez JEAN COUVENS et CORNEILLE MORTIER  
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Jean Fouchart was the first Haitian historian to focus attention on the importance of the Maroons in the epic struggle for liberty culminating in the independence of Saint-Domingue (Haiti). Born in Port-au-Prince where he took his law degree at the Faculté de Droit, the author has led a distinguished career spanning law and letters: journalist, newspaper editor, ambassador to Cuba, prize-winning author of books on the history and culture of Saint-Domingue and Haiti. Among the latter: Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue, Langue et Littérature des Aborigènes d'Ayiti, Les Marrons du Syllabaire.

**The Book.** The setting is Saint-Domingue, the richest of all the European colonies in the Americas. The time embraces the earliest days of the colony and focuses sharply on the closing years of the 18th century. The protagonists are the masses of fugitive slaves, men and women Maroons, and their unsung leaders such as Boukman, Macandal, Polydor, who by guile, determination and bloody sacrifice made it possible for Toussaint and Dessalines to checkmate Bonaparte, subsequently to create the Haitian republic. All told against the backdrop of daily slave life and the politics of the mainland and the colony.

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